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Problems of Nationalised Coal

GREETINGS FROM: Lord Snow · John Berger Sir Compton Mackenzie · George Elvin · Luigi Longo · S. Nosaka · Gaston Plissonnier · Lord Brockway · Professor Burhop · Professor Bernal

JULY 1966

Two Shillings

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Notes of the Month

FORTY-FIVE YEARS

Time is the greatest innovator

FRANCIS BACON

June 19, 1966

Of course forty-five years are to the philosopher meditating on eternity insignificant; to the archaeologist measuring in millenia minute; and to the astronomer calculating in light-years almost invisible. But for us who have lived through these years this half century has been the era of the greatest change in human history, and therefore the climax of life as so far known to us in the universe: the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism, from class society to communism. What was before the dream of the future has become the reality of the present. Solomon said that there is nothing new under the sun. He had not anticipated the sickle and hammer on the surface of the moon. We are entering new worlds. The world of 1921, when our journal began, is now very far away. Where today is the world of Lloyd George and Versailles and enslaved India and China? All their pomp and pageantry is faded, their illusions shrivelled. But the ideas of Marx and Lenin illuminate ever more widely the path forward of mankind. Then the oracles of the old order could speak pityingly of the bankruptcy of the Soviet 'experiment' as proved by the famine and the supposed restoration of capitalism through Nep. Now communism leads one third of the human race. All that we anticipated in our journal in continuously extending outline since 1921 has been sweeping forward in continuously extending fulfilment through these forty-five years, however hard the struggles and sacrifices of the road. Marxism has been proved in life. The struggles are not over. They reach new heights. With every new advance new challenges arise. That is the nature of our period. As Engels said:

> History starts its run slowly from an invisible point, lazily revolving around it, but the circles keep growing, the flight becomes faster and faster—and finally it speeds along like a burning comet, from star to star.

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Cecil Rhodes' Dream

We are indeed entering new worlds. Cecil Rhodes, the intoxicated prophet of imperialism, the founder of that evil legacy of 'Rhodesia' which bedevils Africa today, proclaimed his longing for the conquest of the stars as the unattainable ultimate goal of imperialist ambition:

> To think of these stars that you see overhead at night, these vast worlds which we can never reach. I would annex the planets if I could; I often think of that. It makes me sad to see them so clear and yet so far.

'Can never reach.' The illusion of Rhodes that man can never reach the stars is being as rudely shattered today as has already long been shattered his illusion of the 'All-Red Cape to Cairo route' which should bisect and dominate Africa. It is a different Red which is extending over the world today, not the Red of empire and slavery, but the Red of human liberation and socialism. But his characteristic ambition to 'annex the planets' carries its warning also for today. The vision of the starry heavens above filled the soul of Kant with dreams of the proof of the existence of God. The vision of the stars fills the soul of the imperialist with dreams to grab them. It is fortunate that the era of the conquest of space is coinciding with the era of the advent of communism; and indeed the latter is in the final analysis the necessary foundation for the fulfilment of the former. But the margin is at the moment far too close for safety.

Price of Delay

All the marvels of modern scientific advance, the unlocking of the secrets of the atom and the infinite powers thereby released, of the new chemical and electronic magic, were, one might almost say, predestined for the era of communism, to constitute the limitless powers of collective humanity for building a new world. All the special new horrors of our epoch have arisen because the remains of the historically condemned old social order have survived too long, and have therefore been able to reach out to the new powers to use them in accordance with their obsolete conceptions, expressed with such characteristic naïveté by a Rhodes. We are paying the price of the delay of the revolution in the remaining imperialist sector of the world—of 'gradualism'. All the social-economic conditions for the transition from capitalism were ripe from the beginning of the century, and certainly from the demonstration of the bankruptcy of the old social order in the first world war. The delay of political readiness in the key Western countries of

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capitalism has engendered a grim harvest of extending and ever more fantastic new horrors, so that the imaginings of many artists and writers in the West today are filled with darkness. Therefore we need to draw the consequent twofold conclusions. First, to unite the broadest possible common front of current political action of the peoples of the world in order to avert the immediate dangers which overhang their lives (expressed at this moment most conspicuously in the aggression against Vietnam or the imperialist counter-offensive in Africa; racial oppression; the senseless divisions of the cold war; or the delirium of Pentagon nuclear strategy). Second, to speed the essential change to the new social order.

Churchill's Dream

Sir Winston Churchill also had a dream in his closing years—very different from the dream of Rhodes. He wrote a short story entitled 'The Dream', which was published only after his death. In this dream he imagined himself explaining the world today to the ghost of his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, the Conservative statesman who had died in 1895—that is, just before the new era of imperialism and the socialist revolution began. The ghost was horrified to learn that 'the socialists'—that is, the Labour Party—had come to power. His son was able to reassure him:

> You know, father, they are very reputable men, who are more and more inclined to think like the bourgeoisie.

But the picture became less reassuring when the ghost came to ask about the empire:

> 'But what about India? Is everything all right there? And what about Burma?'
>
> 'Alas! They are lost.'
>
> Randolph groaned heavily:
>
> 'Winston, you are telling me horrible things. I would never have believed such things could happen. I'm glad I did not live to see it.'

But those 'horrible things' for the representatives of the old social order have represented joy and new hope for the majority of mankind.

Churchill and Peace

Nevertheless, Churchill, that artist-statesman, half mountebank and half genius, of the old dying social order, recognised at the very end, in front of his contemporaries the necessity of coming to terms with a changed world. With his insight (from his viewpoint) into

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the larger issues of our time, which placed him so often ahead of the contemporary leaders of his class; equally when he went into the wilderness to fight against Munich for the common front with the Soviet Union; again, when in the midst of the enthusiasm of joint allied victory he was the first to concentrate all his planning on the strategy of the cold war and Fulton and Nato, subsequently adopted by them all; so in the very last years of his active political life he led the way to recognise the bankruptcy of that strategy and the necessity to reverse it and enter into negotiation with the Soviet Union for East-West co-operation. The hullabaloo which has been raised over the memoirs of Lord Moran on Churchill has been concealed in the form of expressions of outrage at a breach of medical etiquette. But the hullabaloo is in fact political. It is not over the outrage of revealing the physical infirmities with which Churchill had to contend during his declining years. It is over the outrage of revealing his intimate political thought during those critical years, not so much because it reveals weaknesses of Churchill (his stature, through evil and good alike, remains unmistakable throughout, despite all physical infirmities), but because it reveals the bankruptcy of the entire post-war strategy of the British ruling class, and because their leading political representative, whom they were trying and still try to use as a mascot, was beginning at the very last to see something of that bankruptcy and to try, against the opposition of them all, with failing powers, and finally in vain, to change the course.

Farewell to Fulton

On the night of Teheran, on November 29, 1943, of the Three-Power Conference and agreement for a future world freed from fascism and built on the foundation of Anglo-Soviet-American co-operation, which brought joy and hope to the anti-fascist peoples all over the world, Moran relates how Churchill returned from the conference in the depth of gloom and despair, in a 'black depression' which nothing could shake off. Henceforth Hitler and the Germans dwindle; every entry shows the pre-occupation with the supreme task to defeat 'the bloody Russians'. This was the line of the 1942 Memorandum which began the planning of the cold war, and which received its public proclamation in the Fulton speech of 1946, designed to destroy the remaining traditions, inherited from Roosevelt, of U.S.-Soviet co-operation at the expense of Britain; proclaiming the aim of the 'showdown' with the Soviet Union; and

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preparing Nato and German rearmament. Churchill was the supreme architect of the cold war; Truman and Bevin were his instruments. But if Churchill was thus the first of the Western statesmen to deliver his public broadside against Three-Power co-operation, at a time when all his colleagues were still paying lip-service to it, and to proclaim openly the aim of using the Western nuclear monopoly in order to dictate terms to the Soviet Union, he was also the first among them, already by 1953, to see that the game was up, once the Western nuclear monopoly was broken and by 1953 the Soviet Union was already in front with thermonuclear development (popular awareness of Soviet nuclear and rocket priority only came after the Sputnik in 1957), and to draw the conclusion that the only course was to seek to reach agreement with the Soviet Union.

Churchill's Last Battle

From 1953 this pre-occupation and this objective for the future of the world dominated his thought and action. The value of the Moran diaries is their revelation that what might have been judged at the time in its occasional public expressions as only a tactical manoeuvre or electoral strategy was in fact, in his most intimate and confidential expression thrown out without a thought of a public or a record, equally in moments of hope or depression as the prospect might seem closer or more remote, his most passionate concern, to which he was determined to devote his last remaining health and strength across every barrier of physical limitation. The revelation is the more convincing because the diarist records these repeated expressions of passionate concern to reach an understanding with the Soviet Union as the supreme final task of his life and decisive for the future of mankind, not with any sign of understanding of their significance, but as evidence of the obsession of a sick man with obviously failing powers. Yet the reality shines through:

> He is haunted by the lost opportunity. He realises that little men are tied to their texts, that he alone can break down the wall of suspicion which shuts off Russia from the West (June 28, 1953).

'Peaceful Co-existence'

This determination is met with universal opposition in all the ruling circles of Britain and the United States. Eden opposes. The

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Foreign Office opposes. The United States opposes. Eisenhower opposes. Dulles opposes. On Dulles, Churchill said:

> Everything is left to Dulles. It appears that the President is no more than a ventriloquist's doll. This fellow preaches like a Methodist Minister, and his bloody text is always the same. . . . Dulles is a terrible handicap. Ten years ago I could have dealt with him. Even as it is I have not been defeated by this bastard. I have been humiliated by my own decay (At Bermuda on December 7, 1953).

And again on Dulles:

> He is a dull, unimaginative, uncomprehending, insensitive man; so clumsy, I hope he will disappear (May 4, 1954).

His own conception he expressed at this time when he hoped he had won over Eisenhower to accept it:

> Communism is not something which we must at all costs wipe out, but rather something we have got to learn to live with, and alongside—peaceful co-existence (July 2, 1954).

It will be recalled that in his famous Aachen speech on May 10, 1956, at the 'Council of Europe' on the occasion of receiving the Charlemagne prize, he, now out of office, made his theme that 'in a true unity of Europe Russia must have her part', and urged that Nato should invite the membership of the Soviet Union (at the Foreign Ministers' Conference in the preceding year, when the Western Foreign Ministers had claimed that Nato was not really anti-Soviet, but only 'defensive', the Soviet Union had officially offered to join Nato, and the Western Foreign Ministers had refused). When the recording angel comes to draw up the final historical record, it may well be that this last defeated battle of a dying Churchill against the odds may be recognised as not his least heroic battle, to be weighed in the balance against many sins.

New Moment of Opportunity

Today once again the wheel has come full circle, and the opportunity has begun to open out anew to make a supreme endeavour to end the disastrous divisions of the cold war and the nuclear arms race, and to build the future of East-West co-operation and peaceful co-existence which can provide the most favourable conditions for the advance and freedom of every people in every country. The bankruptcy of Nato is visible to all. The Warsaw Pact powers have repeated their offer, made again and again through all these years, for the dissolution of both pacts and their replacement by an inclu-

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sive European Security Treaty. President De Gaulle, the last surviving statesman of the wartime anti-fascist coalition, has shown his awareness of the new conditions by his bold initiative to break the shackles of Nato and make the journey to Moscow in order to seek a wider basis of European co-operation. Nor can the indefensible exclusion of China from her rightful place in international politics (and let it never be forgotten that it is the shameful American aggression against China through all these years which has been the key factor to precipitate all the special problems in this sphere) be long maintained.

United States Battleground

In the United States the battle is rising on the whole future political orientation, with the barbarous Vietnam war at the centre of the battle, and the whole relationship to Nato and European military occupation beginning to come into question. It is an unfortunate feature of the U.S. Constitution that, whenever a President with a wider outlook and progressive sympathies is swept into office amid enthusiastic popular support, he may be tolerated so long as he is regarded as useful in a given situation, but so soon as he begins to attempt measures displeasing to the ruling business interests, or nowadays finance-militarist oligarchy, he is speedily removed by assassination or physical incapacitation (Lincoln, Wilson, Roosevelt, Kennedy), and then the automatic mechanism replaces him by a Vice-President who by the operation of the preceding party convention will always be a reactionary. For in the party convention, if popular enthusiasm adopts some hero of the left elements as presidential candidate, then the law of balance operated by the astute party managers requires that his running mate for the supposedly innocuous post of Vice-President shall be a representative of the reactionary wing. Thus Roosevelt, once he had moved to the wider outlook of Teheran and Yalta, was replaced by the ignominious Missouri hack of reaction, Truman, to wreck everything for which Roosevelt had worked. Similarly Kennedy, once he had advanced to the conception of U.S.-Soviet co-operation and made his famous peace speeches in the summer of 1963 for a complete reorientation of American foreign policy, was duly assassinated and replaced by the Texas Southern Democrat, Johnson. Johnson in his election in 1964 won a sweeping majority from an electorate appalled at the reactionary warmaking programme of the Republican candidate Goldwater. Johnson after election has carried out the

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bellicose programme of Goldwater in even more extreme form, and his support in the opinion polls has slumped from 80 per cent at the moment of his election to 46 per cent today, or the lowest of any President since the unspeakable Truman.

Where Does Britain Stand?

But what is Britain doing in this moment of opportunity and decision? The painful answer, so far as official policy is concerned, was set out in the barren sterility of Harold Wilson's speech to the parliamentary labour party on June 15 in reply to the critics of his foreign policy. Britain is far more favourably placed than De Gaulle to exercise decisive influence by pursuing an independent policy such as would transform the world situation. De Gaulle with relatively weak cards has already set everything in movement. But Britain is the main pivot of support of the American military expansionist policy of aggression in Asia, at the same time as continuously conducting its own second class colonialist wars and military operations and maintenance of military bases over the world. This policy has not only been repeatedly condemned by resolutions of the United Nations, it is also ruinous to Britain's economy and the admitted cause of the deficit in the balance of payments. Therefore there is no reason for surprise that the demand for a basic change in this policy wins increasing support from wide sections of the labour movement and public opinion. Such a change would not only open a new future for Britain, ending the deficit on the balance of payments and the dependence on the United States. It would at the same time open a new future for the world, isolating the American military expansionist aggressors from international support and thereby assisting the popular movement of revolt within the United States; rallying the majority of nations and states for an alternative constructive policy; and in this way playing a decisive role for the victory of East-West co-operation and peaceful co-existence. Such are the great perspectives which are involved in the present battle over the future of Britain's world role, and which found initial reflection in the opposition motion at the parliamentary labour party meeting on June 15. To all these new perspectives of the international situation and Britain's responsibilities Mr. Wilson's reply showed complete blindness.

Two Sides of a Debate

Mr. Wilson attached so much importance to this reply as a statement of Britain's policy that he took special steps to ensure, in

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reversal of the previous orders against publication of speeches in the parliamentary group, that its complete text should be published, at the same time as an absolute veto was maintained against the publication of any of the opposition speeches. This is a new procedure. Once, when the proceedings of parliament were considered to be sacrosanct and not suitable for the knowledge of the common people, there was a considerable outcry against 'leaks' leading to publication of alleged versions of speeches in the press. A solution was eventually found by the publication of Hansard or official full report of the debates (initially a family concern, but taken over by the Stationery Office since 1889). Perhaps in accordance with the new procedure Mr. Wilson should propose that Hansard should in future publish only Government speeches and no Opposition speeches.

A Negative Reply

However, the text of Mr. Wilson's speech was in fact a more damning exposure of Britain's present policy than any opposition speech could be. On the key economic question of the ruinous cost of the overseas military expenditure as the cause of the deficit on the balance of payments he attempted no answer. His invocation of the United Nations as the supposed pivot of Britain's policy could be answered by any schoolboy who took the trouble to refer to the repeated resolutions of the United Nations condemning Britain's policy in one sphere or another. On Vietnam he ignored Britain's responsibility as Co-Chairman of the Geneva Agreements to oppose the violation of their prohibition of the invasion of Vietnam by foreign armed forces, at the same time as the Agreements specifically laid down that North and South Vietnam should not be regarded as two separate states. But most significant was the repeated emphasis, in terms redolent of the old sanctimonious jingo tub-thumping celebration of Britain's manifest destiny as a world imperialist power, on the indispensable necessity to maintain Britain's world military power in the widest regions of other continents and distant oceans—of course, for the benefit of Asia and Africa and to prevent other powers coming in. This repetition of old tunes of increasingly hollow British self-glorification, combined with practical servility to the United States, without a hint of constructive policy, could produce not a ripple of influence in the international situation save a possible grunt of satisfaction from Washington.

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British Constitutional Procedure

Britain's constitutional procedure differs from that of the United States. But the outcome is similar, whatever the difference of mechanism, to defeat the will of the people whenever it shows itself pressing in unacceptable directions (unacceptable to the ruling oligarchy) even through the blurred reflection of the electoral machinery. The mass of the people in Britain as in the United States desire policies for peace and social progress, and at moments of historical upsurge express through the electoral machinery a torrent of revolt against conservative reaction and the ruling class. But then the familiar mechanism which operates through the so-called 'two-party' system gets to work, and by the time the upper governing circles are reached the revolt has turned into its opposite. In 1906 a record electoral landslide swept out the Tories in a torrent of popular anger, and returned a majority which consisted largely of radicals, anti-imperialists, some pacifists and some Labour representatives. But securely ensconced at the top was the tight little bunch of the Liberal Imperialists, Asquith, Grey and Haldane, who in complete secrecy, not only from parliament, but even from the rest of the Cabinet, continued the Tory foreign policy, in collusion with the Tory Front Bench, and prepared the first world war. As Lord Hugh Cecil wrote in a letter to *The Times* on April 29, 1916, the war was decided

> not by the House of Commons or by the electorate, but by the concurrence of Ministers and ex-Ministers.

Similarly in 1935 Baldwin and Hoare swept the election with a majority of 247 for a platform pledging firm and unwavering maintenance of collective security against fascist aggression. The outcome was the Hoare-Laval Pact and Munich.

Why Should Labour Appear as the War Party?

Since 1945 the Labour Party has replaced the old pre-1914 Liberal Party as the main mechanism for transmuting the popular will. In 1945 the electorate swept out the Tories in a surge of popular enthusiasm for anti-fascist unity of the peoples, alliance with the Soviet Union, the disarming of Germany, and socialist advance. They got Bevin, the cold war, the rearmament of Germany and the wage freeze. Once again the right-wing imperialist clique at the top, in collusion with the Tory Front Bench rather than their colleagues (it was subsequently revealed that Premier Attlee did not divulge to the

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Cabinet the decision to manufacture the British atom bomb) fulfilled the task of transforming the popular revolt into the opposite. When the Tories were able to take advantage of the consequent disillusionment with Labour to return to office for thirteen years, they even cashed in on this situation by presenting themselves to the electorate as the representatives of a more reasonable and flexible policy in international affairs in contrast to the rigid cold war anti-communist anti-Soviet dogmatism of Labour. Just as in the United States the Republicans have sought to present the Democrats as the War Party (first world war, second world war, Korean war), and Eisenhower won the 1952 election on his pledge to end the war in Korea, so in Britain the same tactics may be observed. It was Churchill and Macmillan who made the aim of a Summit Conference to reach agreement with the Soviet Union the pivot of their electoral campaigns. It was Eden who negotiated the Vietnam Agreements of 1954 which would have established a sovereign, independent, neutral Vietnam, free from the invasion of American troops, while Wilson supports the tearing up of those Agreements by the United States and the barbarous war on the Vietnam people.

Time to Turn a New Leaf

Only after thirteen years of gathering resentment against the rule of Tory reaction and its stop-go economy did the electorate at last return Labour back to power, in 1964 and 1966, though no longer with the same enthusiasm as in 1945. Once again the people have received the same return: continuance of Tory foreign policy, crushing increases in arms expenditure and overseas military expenditure, and the familiar cycle of the credit squeeze and wage restraint. Is it not time that the labour movement should stir itself to end this ancient story? When De Gaulle takes France out of the military command of Nato, and expels the American occupation troops and bases from France, it is the British Labour Government that stands out as the main champion of Nato and the cold war and rearmed German militarism and the United States warmakers. When De Gaulle goes to Moscow to promote negotiations for closer co-operation of all Europe, Foreign Secretary Stewart at the meeting of the Nato Fourteen pours cold water on the conception (which was voiced also by the Dutch Government), and Labour Britain works to rebuild and strengthen Nato, also, if necessary, without France. When France expels the American troops, Labour Britain receives them. When France calls for an end to the American war on Vietnam,

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and the establishment of a sovereign independent neutral Vietnam in accordance with the Geneva Agreements, Labour Britain stands forward to endorse the American violation of the Geneva Agreements and criminal war of invasion against the Vietnam people. Does all this really correspond to the wishes and feelings of the labour movement or the people of this country? Is it not time that all sections of the labour movement should stir themselves to change this situation and win a new perspective for Britain?

Test of Experience

Throughout these forty-five years our journal has fought, in close association with all the socialist and progressive elements of the trade union and labour movement, for aims which the experience of these years has justified. In any continuous treatment of all the varied and complex issues of so long a period there will have been room for plenty of errors of judgment and estimation. But on the great issues of our epoch we stand on the record. On the judgment of the new world situation after the first world war and the prospect of the Soviet Union and of communism in the world. On the judgment of the capitalist stabilisation of the twenties (not merely in general terms, but with a precise prediction of the concrete conditions of its downfall, such that Strachey later described the indignation of prominent academic economists to find the prediction made at the time only by our journal so exactly fulfilled). On the path of national liberation and its future victory. On fascism and the conditions necessary for its defeat. On Munich (once again, not in general terms with hindsight after the event, but at the time and before the event exposing the strategy of inflating the war atmosphere in order to present the betrayal as a triumph of peace, and the real war danger which would then follow, with the prospect of a phase during which Britain would be at war with Hitler, but alone and without allies). On the atom bomb, within a fortnight of its dropping, the detailed exposure of the illusion of Anglo-American strategic supremacy on its basis, or monopoly, and the prediction that the bomb would be more likely to prove, not the weapon of the loudly proclaimed 'American-British power predominance' over the Soviet Union, but the instrument of 'the uttermost dependence of this country on the United States'. Or on the murder of Kennedy, within a few days after the event, the first exposure here, not only of Oswald as an obvious Van der Luffe fall-guy and expendable previous small-fry agent (whose twelve-hour statement and examination

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after arrest, as we have subsequently learned, were 'lost' from any record, while his mouth was conveniently closed by shooting), but of the threads pointing to the CIA. Similarly on all the questions of Britain's chronic crisis, the economic perspective, the problems of the labourmovement and four (in parliamentary terms, six) Labour Governments.

Proof of Marxism

On all these and a hundred other issues of our epoch we are ready to stand the test of comparison of the remorseless printed record of the judgments made at the time with any other publication or newspaper from *The Times* downwards (or upwards) which has appeared continuously in this country during these same forty-five years. Such an examination by a rigorous jury, only concerned with facts, would we believe establish that by and large, after all errors and omissions have been allowed for, on the whole our judgments have been closer to the historical outcome than those of more distinguished or better known non-Marxist publications during this epoch. And this not in the sense of any claim to superiority of a journal handicapped by limitations of staff and resources unknown to the lavish equipment of these non-Marxist journals. But in the sense of the superior strength of Marxism as a co-operative collective theory and practice to grapple with the problems of our epoch in the light of some understanding of the general line of development and of the conditions of the approach to any concrete problem. In this co-operative advance, whose powerful expression is the revolutionary transformation of the modern world, all those socialists and trade unionists whose association, equally as writers, readers and supporters, has made possible this survival of a socialist journal over forty-five years, have in this way also made their contribution, alongside all their other activities in many fields, to our common aims for which our journal fights and will continue to fight, the aims of the victory of socialism and the labour movement in Britain, and the victory of human liberation all over the world.

R.P.D.

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PROBLEMS OF NATIONALISED COAL

W. Paynter

General Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers

THE measures and plans now being undertaken by the Government are intended to determine the pattern of society for the 1970s. This is how a member of the Government explained and justified Government policy at a recent Miners' Gala. It is to be hoped that the plans and forecasts for the new society are more soundly based than is the case in respect of fuel and power.

The Government's White Paper on Fuel Policy issued in October, 1965, and its projected estimates for the Coal Industry have been completely discredited. They estimated that by 1970 coal would only be needed at around 170 to 180 million tons. They based their estimates, they claim, upon current trends which indicated that coal would be progressively replaced by alternative fuels—mainly fuel oil. The industry's productive capacity would, of course, be adjusted to meet this decline in demand.

The facts show how wide of the mark their estimates were and those of the Energy Advisory Council and the Department of Economic Affairs who are identified with the forecasts. In the NCB financial year ending March 27, 1966, consumption was down almost 8 million tons on the previous year to 184.6 million tons. Unless there is Government remedial action, there is no reason to believe that this trend will be reversed. In fact, the Regional coal price increases will accelerate this trend, so much so that the Prices and Incomes Board estimate a market decline from the price increases alone at around 3½ million tons.

What is even more disturbing is the decline in production. Production fell in the last financial year by over 9 million tons to 179 million tons. In the first seven weeks of the new year it has fallen by a further 1¼ million tons while consumption has remained relatively stable. The startling significance of these statistics is that production is falling faster than consumption. Indeed, part of the Government's Fuel Policy orders the rapid closing of uneconomic pits and the concentration and expansion of production in the 'sound heart' of the industry, the East Midlands and Yorkshire. Production in each of these two coalfields fell over the same period by over two

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million tons. The reason for this is the constantly increasing heavy loss of manpower, especially in those main coalfields.

The White Paper forecasts a manpower decline of around 27,000 a year up to 1970. It is in fact declining at the rate of over 40,000 a year. In recent weeks there is evidence, as the accelerated programme of pit closures demanded by the Government gets under way, that the rate of loss is increasing. The most serious aspect is the rate of voluntary leaving, now running at over a thousand men a week and these are mainly men in the age range of between 20 and 40 years.

Against these facts the projected estimates of the Government's Fuel Policy statement are made to appear ridiculous and those responsible for them stupid in the extreme. Their forecasts for 1970 will be reached in 1966. The main mistake responsible for their discredited forecasts was their complete ignoring of the effect of their direction to accelerate pit closures upon miners and mining communities. As is too often the case, they did not estimate the reactions of people, although these reactions were already manifest during the period that studies were taking place. It is true that the Government has provided financial relief but this was largely an inevitable part of their plan to close down rapidly uneconomic collieries. In any event, it did not solve the industry's financial problems since it was still necessary to increase coal prices to meet an anticipated deficit in 1966-67 of around £80 million.

The fact is that not only have their projected estimates been repudiated by events, but their fuel policy has completely failed to stabilise the position of the Coal Industry. There is now, of course, the added factor of natural gas when assessing the energy situation over the next five or ten years. The Minister of Power has stated that these natural gas discoveries do not signal the end of the coal industry. I am of the view that if the Government's Fuel and Power Policy is not radically changed the effect upon coal mining will be severe.

While there is no precise information as to the real value of these recent discoveries it is clear that big reserves exist. Prospecting is still continuing and it is probable that for commercial reasons the potential supply has been understated rather than over-stated. It is quite conceivable that the yield and supply over the next ten years could build up to 100 million tons of coal equivalent. The stated yield of existing discoveries is equal to around 25 million tons of coal annually. Equally serious can be the movement away from coal by main consumers.

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The Chairman of the Electricity Board is reported as stating:

> If cheap gas is here and available on a large scale, then those who judge the long-term comparative economics of gas and electricity must remember that gas can be converted into electricity in the CEGB's large power stations and calls for no new network nor conversion of consumer apparatus.

Coal's main future market is thus made an uncertain one by the events and within the context of current fuel policy. It is said, of course, that total energy demand will increase at a greater rate and this new source of power will be absorbed by this increasing demand. The conclusion being drawn is that the share of coal in this growing market will not be significantly affected. In my opinion this reasoning is unsound and is not supported by the experience of the last few years.

The following points are important in arriving at a sound conclusion:

1. Natural gas will be the cheapest form of energy available and within a fuel policy based upon 'free competition' and 'consumers' freedom of choice' is bound to affect adversely the dearer forms of power.

2. Energy demand is expanding now but the fact is that coal's share is declining and this trend is likely to be intensified when the full effect of the recent price increase is felt.

3. Fuel oil over recent years has not only been absorbing the increase in energy demand, but has progressively displaced coal from its traditional markets.

4. Natural gas is to be exploited in the main by the big oil monopolies. They have been granted licences by the Government both to prospect and exploit any natural gas resources found. These oil monopolies represent the most powerful single economic grouping exerting an influence in national and international economic and financial policy.

5. These oil monopolies will obviously push the interests of fuel oil and natural gas in which they have heavy investments. This, it seems to me, can only succeed at the expense of coal and manufactured gas.

The Government's fuel policy needs immediately to be reviewed and recast. The discovery and supply of natural gas should be accepted as complementary to indigenous coal. Together they should form the basis of Britain's fuel policy making possible the restriction of oil imports and the cessation of imports of natural gas from other countries. Such a policy would immediately relieve the country's balance of payment problems and dependence upon imported fuels.

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The policy of accelerating pit closures should be abandoned and substituted by a slowing down of closures as a measure necessary to restore confidence in the industry's future. Further financial assistance should be provided and a complete suspension of interest payments applied. Wages and benefits in the industry must be radically improved and made competitive with other more congenial occupations. In full employment and against the crisis of confidence in the industry's future, this is vital if the manpower problems are to be resolved.

SEAMEN AND THE STATE

J. R. Campbell

THE seamen's strike, which is at the moment of writing still going strong, is an event of more than usual interest. It has a bearing on the meaning and relevance of the Government's incomes policy, on the reality of the Government's drive for the modernisation of industry, on the relations of the state with the trade union movement, on the application of 'social justice' to the affairs of this key industry.

We are being told by the press that the losses in respect to the balance of payments will be around £20 million a month. Yet the Government seems almost to have welcomed this strike with a view to demonstrating how tough it was going to be with the workers. All the paraphernalia of the Emergency Powers Act has been invoked to intimidate an official strike whose demands are to the utmost extent reasonable. Yet the case for a Labour government intervening on the workers' side was absolutely overwhelming. Shipping is an industry working under a narrow vicious system of labour discipline imposed by the Merchant Shipping Act (1894) that is without parallel in any shore-based British industry. Not even the shipowners dare to defend this Act in its present form. Here was an opportunity for a Labour government to introduce some necessary and popular changes.

Apart from this infamous Act the industry is one where conditions have notoriously lagged behind those of the rest of British industry, where the previous leadership, by ordinary right-wing standards of trade union administration, were for years notoriously lax, incompetent and, many trade unionists believed, corrupt. The Govern-

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ment had, as far as this industry is concerned, all the necessary data comparing British and foreign seamen's conditions; comparisons which showed the British in the bottom half of the wages league. Yet despite these low wages the industry is manifestly losing ground. There was a time when the net earnings from shipping made a powerful contribution to the British balance of payments. In 1958 the British capitalist economy sold £629 million of shipping services to foreigners and bought £586 million of services from them. There was a net favourable balance of no less than £128 million in 1958. By 1964 it had been changed into a net deficit of £25 million.

It was therefore an industry that ought to have caught the eye of a 'modernising' government, an industry with its continuing influence, generation after generation, of the great shipping families on the various lines. They have been moving with the times but moving much too slowly.

> Since the war British owners have done more missing than hitting. They have been slow into tankers, slow into bulk carriers, and slow into cruising while others have scooped the cream. (*Observer*, May 22.)

In some respects the ship-owners of the 1960s resemble the mine-owners of the 1920s and the 1930s. They claim that they are earning a very much poorer return on their capital than is the case of other British industries. They seem to regard this as a sufficient reason for keeping seamen's wages and conditions below those of other industries. They are constantly complaining that foreign shipowners have an unfair advantage because they are subsidised by the state (as is indeed the case). They seem to think that this is sufficient justification for expecting British seamen to accept low wages and in effect to subsidise them. Of course, not all sections of the industry are in the doldrums. The companies whose main trade is cargo liners appear to be doing quite well and are rationalising and automating ships' operations very fast indeed.

> Efficient operators in the cargo and tanker trades are handling their tonnage with lower crew costs as devices like automatic steering and boiler-control take over from the sailors. Over the last few years Manchester Liners have reduced crews on their 10,000 tonners from 50 men to 30. (*Sunday Times*, May 22.)

Mr. Aubrey Jones of the PIB is very fond of giving lectures on productivity to workers seeking wage increases. But over a wide field in this industry, productivity is increasing all the time with wages remaining comparatively low.

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Some people believed that the Prime Minister would do one of his eleventh hour interventions and get intensive negotiations going, but both he and the Minister of Labour, Mr. Gunter, stayed aloof as long as possible and when the Prime Minister finally saw the seamen's executive it was to deliver an unimpressive monologue. In fact, both Wilson and Gunter appeared to be viewing the strike not as an opportunity for beginning to remedy intolerable grievances, nor as an industrial problem to be solved by modernisation, but as an opportunity for demonstrating to foreign bankers and capitalists generally how tough a Labour government could be with the trade unions.

The Government had agreed to an increase in doctors' remuneration (quite justifiably, in my opinion) going far beyond the incomes policy norm. So it decided to make up for this breach of incomes policy by standing firm as far as the seamen were concerned. Yet the seamen had a clear case for being also treated as exceptions. Mr. Gunter told the House of Commons on April 22:

> This Prices and Incomes Board was never intended to restrain the lower paid from getting more. What was in our minds was this: that we felt that the better off had better hold back while the lower paid caught up.

But it was clear that the Government was not concerned with this. It had made an exception on the comparatively *highly paid doctors*. It was not prepared to make one of the *low paid seamen*. They were expected to adhere to the norm. The Government was not concerned with social justice, modernisation, or with a speedy settlement of the dispute but with impressing the bankers of Britain and America with its willingness to stand up to the unions. The Prime Minister's broadcast was quite extraordinary in its hypocrisy. He sympathised with the seamen, he admitted that they had many grievances, but told them that the strike was unnecessary and could accomplish nothing. There was not even the usual hypocritical stance of pretending to be neutral between the contending parties. The seamen were told that they could expect and get nothing. The strike was described as a strike against the state and against the incomes policy. One can imagine the uproar that would have arisen had a Tory Prime Minister spoken in such terms. A strike whose main object was to force the ship-owners to concede the 40-hour week on the same basis as other British workers was denounced as a strike against the state, and a strike against the incomes policy. Is it a state interest that British seamen must be forced to work longer hours and endure worse conditions than other British workers?

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Is it a state interest that workers held back and oppressed, should never be allowed to try and catch up with their fellows? Is it a state interest that Labour Prime Ministers should manifestly take the side of a group of hard-faced reactionary employers against their own workers? Mr. Wilson soon followed up and demonstrated that this was no mere rhetoric by introducing a series of regulations under the Emergency Powers Act. The state is mobilised to intervene against the workers at the slightest excuse.

Where does all this leave the incomes policy? What light does it throw on the Government's basic attitude to the trade unions? Clearly the idea that the incomes policy is concerned with 'social justice', however interpreted, is exposed once and for all. If ever there was a case for an exception being made it was with the seamen, but the Government was preoccupied from the very outset with demonstrating to the world that it regarded the 3-3½ per cent norm as sacred and was prepared to enforce it on all trade unions. The question of whether incomes policy is compatible with free collective bargaining has also been answered. A union is free to bargain provided the settlement does not exceed the norm of 3-3½ per cent. A union has the right to strike but if it insists on a settlement above the norm, the Prime Minister is free to tell it that it is striking against the state. He is free to take an attitude which strengthens the will of the employers to resist. He is free to invoke the intimidatory powers of the state not merely against the union involved but against other workers who are likely to come to that union's assistance. The introduction of the emergency regulations is not merely a repetition of what Labour and Tory governments have done in the past, but when viewed in conjunction with the incomes policy it is a move towards the state regulation of wages. Since 1945 the monopoly capitalist economies in Europe have been teetering on a knife edge between mass unemployment and inflation, between creating sufficient mass unemployment with all its unforeseen consequences as a means of holding back the wages movement, or proceeding to direct state intervention to halt the wages movement and to shackle the trade unions. It is the British Labour Government which in 1966 is at the head of this movement.

The description of the working conditions of British seamen contained in the Interim Report of the Committee of Inquiry fully substantiates the seamen's case. It is admitted (that after taking the 1965 agreement into account) 'there can be no doubt that standards of remuneration in Germany, Holland, and Scandinavian countries

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are in most respects higher than in Britain'. This must be borne in mind when apparently high percentage increases of wages are being referred to. If the wages of a group of workers have remained for many years below the level of those of comparable foreign workers, it will require a very high percentage increase to enable them to catch up. It is absolutely clear that even if the full seamen's claim had been conceded they would barely have done so. The employers' own census of hours worked show that 66 hours per week were being worked on 'foreign going' ships and 73.6 hours in the 'home trade'.

But of course the Inquiry was bedevilled by the Prices and Incomes principles. The Court did not consider the seamen's case on its merits at all. It was concerned in going some way to meeting the seamen's case, without as *The Times* put it 'wrecking the Prices and Incomes Policy'.

Operating in this strait-jacket it could not do the honest thing and recommend the immediate granting of the seamen's full claim at once. It gives with the left hand and takes away with the right. Particularly provocative is the withdrawal of the employers' tiny concession of 12s. 6d. per month 'efficient service pay'. Such silly trickery is unworthy and only a desire to uphold the 'incomes policy' at any price, can explain its being in the report at all.

The infamous suggestion was made that the TUC and its affiliated unions should unite, not in support of the seamen, but in support of this utterly biased report — a proposal which resembles the shameful betrayal of the miners in the General Strike of 1926. The duty of the General Council and its affiliated unions is to bring the utmost pressure on the government and the shipowners to grant, here and now, the fully substantiated claim of the seamen. Anything less is betrayal.

Did you read 'The State Steps In' by R. Page Arnot in last month's issue? It put into historical perspective the Government's actions on the Prices and Incomes Policy.

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THE SEAMAN'S LIFE

I have been a Seaman on lower decks too long to think of being anything but a union man on a ship. No shipowner alive has ever given a crew an inch of space or a breath of sea air until he had to, and I know that shipmakers are the same in shipyards. There's a difference of course. Too many ships on the high seas still ask seamen below decks to work long hours and to live in filth and squalor and to eat like pigs. I admit that I am looking at it from the sailor's point of view, but you try sitting under the hot sweating stars of Mogadiscio or lying off Pernambuco on a tropical night in a Greek coffin on charter to Smith and Connelly or someone well-thought-of in London, and then, when the watch is called, go below to that stinking flesh hole. Ask anyone down there whether they are pleased that the Greeks have had their unions smashed to pieces. Even a Royce ship, registered in Hong Kong and carrying a very clean Chinese crew can be a filthy slum, so revolting (as the one I knew was) that the foul and sickening smell of HMP grease melting on a lousy bearing is preferable to the smell of your own bunk at night in a far Eastern port.

[JAMES ALDRIDGE *The Statesman's Game*, Hamish Hamilton, 1966: 25s. (this passage is as written by the fictional narrator in this brilliant study and exposure of modern Britain).]

SCIENCE & SOCIETY

Established as an independent journal of Marxism in 1936, *Science & Society* is the oldest publication extant devoted to the theory of Marxism. It publishes articles in all areas, and has included among its contributors such noted authorities as Paul A. Baran, J. D. Bernal, V. Gordon Childe, Maurice Dobb, W. E. B. Du Bois, J. B. S. Haldane, Oskar Lange, Harold J. Laski, Joan Robinson and Paul M. Sweezy.

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30 East 20th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003

CORRECTION: On line 2, p. 197 of May issue, for £321 million read £371 million. The official return for Government overseas expenditure net for 1964 was £431 million and for long-term overseas capital export net, £371 million, totalling £802 million, while the total deficit on the Balance of Payments was recorded as £745 million (Cmd. 2629).

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VIETNAM:

1. A PROTEST FROM AUSTRALIA

M. O'Brien

General Secretary, Australian Railways' Union

CONSEQUENT upon the decision of the Australian Liberal and Country Party Government to increase our military commitments in Vietnam, I forwarded the following telegram to Prime Minister Holt:

> On behalf Australian Railways Union desire enter vigorous protest decision your Government conscripting Australian youth for overseas military service without sanction of people who should be given opportunity determining their attitude by way of referendum . . .

No-one can deny that the USA put pressure on the Australian Government to increase our commitments in this, one of the most unjust wars in the history of mankind. Then we had the shameless spectacle of some of our manufacturers in the heavy industry field clamouring for their share of the manufacture of armaments and complaining that the bulk of the expenditure on war equipment was going to the USA.

Another disquieting feature is the complete black-out on criticism of the Government's action that the Government has forced on the 'free and independent' press and radio including the ABC in Australia. The only publicity that can be obtained is when there is an incident or a demonstration in which the police are involved. The people of Australia are not given the opportunity of studying the views of those who are opposed to Australia's participation in this unholy conflict.

It is pleasing to know the Australian Labour Party are opposed to the Australian Government's decision to send troops to Vietnam and to their cowardly action in forcing conscription on the youth of Australia. The action of our Government will bring pain and suffering to many homes in Australia and will cause our Asian friends to regard us as an imperialist nation bent on the destruction of their countries and the mass murder of their people. We must resist this at all cost.

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VIETNAM:

2. A PROTEST FROM BRITAIN

Alex Kitson

General Secretary, Scottish Commercial Motormen's Union

WHY do I believe that it is the duty of every sincere Labour supporter to express a public protest against the policy of the United States in Vietnam? It is my opinion, that unless something positive is done to ensure that the Labour Government dissociates itself from the United States policy in Vietnam, and calls for the withdrawal of all foreign troops, plus the reconvening of the Geneva Conference, we could be heading for a third world war. It is important, that every opportunity should be taken to draw attention to this threat to the mass of the people in Great Britain.

I feel that we hold the key to the breaking up of American policies in the Far East. I also believe, that we should have a complete reassessment of our foreign policy East of Suez. If this was done, the strain on the economy of this country could be rapidly relieved, and there would be no need for an incomes policy, such as is being enforced on the workers of this country.

GEORGE HARDY

We pay tribute to an honoured veteran of the international working class movement, and a valued contributor and staunch friend, George Hardy, who died at the age of 82 on May 24. His life was a proud record of militant struggle in many countries, including in the United States and in China as well as in this country. He wrote many articles and reviews for *Labour Monthly* from 1931 ('British Workers and the War in Manchuria') to 1960 ('Strike for the Pensioners' and 'Seamen's Struggles').

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NEO-NAZIS AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

D. N. Pritt

THE true nature of the West German State and its sinister role in Europe and in the world, have been persistently 'played down' by the capitalist press everywhere. Yet a full understanding of it is of crucial importance for all questions of peace, and of relaxing tension and of establishing a stable peaceful co-existence between Western capitalism and the Socialist States of Eastern Europe. It is important that these hitherto imperfectly understood features of West Germany in the international scene should be more fully known (that is indeed the main purpose of the publication of my recent pamphlet: 'Neo-Nazis: The Danger of War').

What is this Federal Republic of Germany? It is something more than just one more powerful and highly-armed industrial giant. It is a Neo-Nazi state, largely equipped with Hitler's teams of Nazis. Its old brutal ruling class, almost unchanged, which created Hitler's Reich and has been revived in its wealth and power by the ruling class of the USA, blocks every step and every proposal for peace and openly proclaims a policy of revanchist and aggressive war for the reconquest of much of Europe, with the help *inter alia* of nuclear weapons, supposedly rendered 'safe' by promises that the trigger will not be pulled without the consent of its American and British accomplices (a 'promise' which, if it were perchance kept, would be the only promise that that unscrupulous ruling class ever did keep). And this ruling class, in addition, is already passing legislation to enable it to hold down its own population by a completely dictatorial rule, actually exceeding in some respects that established by Hitler in the mid-thirties. Such a policy is of course not only destructive of long-term prospects of peace but also immediately fatal to any effort for the relaxation of tension in Europe.

Now, in what sort of situation are these ruthless and efficient Neo-Nazis playing their dangerous game? It is pretty explosive. It is true that, as so often, the USSR is doing all that it can to ease the tension. In particular, one may recall the realistic and constructive proposal recently made by the Soviet Foreign Minister, Gromyko, after his visit to the Pope, for an all-European Conference to discuss inclusive European Security; but there is little response to this from the capitalist powers, with their mixture of fears of Socialist advance

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and hopeless-helpless feeling that their economies can only survive with the stimulus of incessant danger of war.

What are the capitalist powers doing? In the USA, the ruling class is in a dilemma: it is more frustrated and bewildered than ever before by its appalling situation in Vietnam and by the opposition to its Vietnam policy shown by the best elements of its own population and by the public opinion of practically the whole world—so wide and strong that it often seems as if it had not a friend in the world except our 'Socialist' Prime Minister and some of his colleagues. Nor is that the end of its difficulties. It has serious quarrels with France over Nato, its own heavy racialist problems, and its increasing loss of gold reserves and fear of a major recession. It is growing angry with Britain over her alleged anti-French attitude, and the recent 'study mission' of Senator Frank Church to Western Europe has shown that its strong support of Neo-Nazi West Germany in Nato and in Europe generally is creating further difficulties for it, and is leading to conflict with more conciliatory trends in West Europe. This article has to be written before the Nato meeting in Brussels on June 6, which is very likely to accentuate the difficulties.

In France, de Gaulle on behalf of the ruling class is playing old-fashioned adventurous politics with the understandable motive of re-establishing capitalist France as a world power with an independent policy. His moves possess elements of hopefulness in that he not only embarrasses and weakens the great aggressive alliance called Nato but also presents possibilities of rapprochement with the USSR.

Then there is Britain and its new 'Socialist' government, with its large majority and the prospect of five years of government (always, of course, under an unchanging ruling class which finds no difficulty in getting its own way whichever of the two main parties happens to be in office). Britain still has considerable prestige, and could exercise great influence for peace. But in truth, the policies of its new government merely degrade it into serving the cold war and destroying all real hope of improving its economy and the standards of its people by a combination of old style imperialism, in areas where it still has some power, and of abject subservience in general policy to the two most reactionary and dangerous Powers in the world. To the USA, it is completely subservient in every field, including above all that of its Vietnam genocide. To Neo-Nazi West Germany, it is almost as abject, and the burden of its expenditure on the British army uselessly held in that country makes it a humble—and unsuccessful—petitioner

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to these super-bullies for financial support. It even supports the infamous and incredibly dangerous demand, which I mentioned above, of these 'disarmed by Potsdam' militarist gangsters for nuclear weapons. It supports, too, the Hallstein doctrine of pretending that the by now stable and prosperous industrial state of the GDR, whose sincere anti-Nazi policy and conduct should endear it to every peace loving state, does not exist. (How ridiculous this is is shown by the fact that even Mr. Wilson, before he became Prime Minister, had spoken out in favour of its *de facto* recognition.) The Bible tells us that no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate one and love the other, or will leave the one and cleave to the other. One of Harriet Beecher Stowe's Negro characters said that the Bible was wrong, for he himself served two masters, and the Lord knew he hated them both. Mr. Wilson at least serves two foreign masters; I wonder whether he loves them both as he professes or hates them both as he should.

The betrayal of Socialism and of Britain by our government does not end there. It proposes to join the 'Common Market', which is said to unite Europe, and thereby to unite Britain with Europe; but in truth this market is a great instrument for the continued division of Europe and is part of the elaborate capitalist machinery for ensuring that Western Europe, including Britain, shall remain in the dying capitalist world.

What are the real motives and causes for the government thus developing—'escalating' if one wants to use the bastard English of its American rulers—the inherent maladies of Social Democracy to this degree? They are of course various. There are the obsessive anti-Soviet sentiments which have shocked observers so often (and which, 26 years ago, surprised and gratified me by driving me out of the Labour Party). There is the imperialist outlook which made Gaitskell at first instinctively support the Suez war and now makes the government ready to bankrupt us all by 'East of Suez' support of the profits of its ruling class. But above all there is the suicidal and all-pervading anti-Communist obsession which makes the Labour Party the finest bulwark against Socialist advance that any ruling class has ever enjoyed. It is more urgent than ever before that the Left in the Labour Party should fight side by side with the Communist Party to reverse the present policies, to make Britain a force for peace in the world, and to make us not just lovers of our country but proud to proclaim that we are British.

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THE GERMAN DIALOGUE

John Peet

DURING July, if there are no last minute snags, leading political figures from each of the two German states will be able to present their point of view to live audiences in the other German state. Spokesmen of the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD), largest party in West Germany, will speak in Karl-Marx-Stadt in the German Democratic Republic; and spokesmen of the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR (SED) will speak at Hanover in West Germany. A couple of political meetings may not seem much, but in fact the exchange of speakers between the two parties may well be a significant breakthrough in the German political scene.

Ever since the breakdown of Four-Power occupation rule in Germany in 1948, and the subsequent formation of two separate German states (the West German Federal Republic in September 1949, and the German Democratic Republic in October 1949) there has been an almost complete lack of top-level political communication between the two states. The boycott has been one-sided. From its foundation, the German Democratic Republic has been ready and willing for talks, discussions and negotiations with West Germany; but the West German Government and the Establishment as a whole, including the opposition Social Democratic Party, has adopted a super-Nelsonic attitude. Not only did Bonn clap its telescope to its blind eye and proclaim it could see no GDR; it also held its ear-trumpet to its deaf ear and failed to hear a sound.

The Bonn stance that if only the GDR were ignored long enough and loud enough it would shrivel up and go away, attractive as it may have seemed to Western politicians in earlier years, has long been exposed as an extreme case of wishful thinking. The German Democratic Republic has emerged not only as a viable and well-run state, but as one of the leading industrial powers of the world, and the second most important industrial producer in the socialist camp. With the down-grading of the Cold War in Europe, the myopic Bonn view of the GDR as a hole in the map has become increasingly untenable, and increasingly irritating to other Western countries. International bodies ranging from the International Olympic Committee to United Nations subsidiary organisations have found their time consumed with endless West German intrigues to 'keep the East Germans out'.

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But although the West German Government still clings today to its hopelessly outdated view that it is the only legal government of the whole of Germany, and the only authorised spokesman of the whole of Germany—a view roughly as realistic as regarding Kerensky as the Prime Minister of Russia—there has been over the past few years a growing realisation in wide circles in West Germany that this attitude cannot be maintained indefinitely. Many Social Democrats and trade unionists, very considerable sections of the intelligentsia, businessmen interested in trade prospects, and even a number of Christian Democratic politicians have begun to realise that some sort of settlement with the GDR is bound to come.

But the inertia of the frozen attitudes of the Cold War has been enormous, and it was not until early this year that the Social Democratic leadership decided, rather warily, to brave the Bonn taboo, and to respond for the first time to an approach from the German Democratic Republic. On February 7, the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR addressed an open letter to the West German SPD, suggesting that the two German workers' parties, despite all their differences, should make a joint attempt to get the German problem out of the present blind alley.

Most political observers in both German states thought that this approach, like more than one hundred other GDR approaches, would be ignored; but the SPD leadership, after mulling over the problem for six weeks, took the unprecedented step of replying. The SPD letter of March 19 was largely devoted to polemical attacks on the policy of the German Democratic Republic, but it did suggest that a 'public discussion' should take place in all parts of Germany.

The German dialogue had begun; the next stage consisted of what *The Times* described with some justice as a 'ponderous correspondence' between the two parties. Predictably, after such a long period in which the two German states have developed in such different ways, and in which there has been no direct communication, the Open Letters exchanged by the two sides re-hashed old grievances and complaints. But in the course of the correspondence, the positions of the sides did crystallise out to a certain extent.

The SPD and the SED agree that something should be done about Germany, the sick man of Europe, but disagree diametrically upon the treatment. The SPD suggests applying ointment to his sores, in the form of 'small steps' to make life easier for citizens of both German states; and the SED suggests that the time for palliatives has passed, and that a real effort must be made to treat the disease at

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the core by making fundamental changes in West Germany's Cold War policies.

A fair summary of the suggestions made so far by the two sides presents many difficulties, since the exchange of Open Letters has been very wordy, and many of the points raised are understandable only against the background of the entire course of development in Germany since 1945. But despite this difficulty let me try to present the main suggestions. The West German Social Democrats suggest:

1. The GDR should relax the strict controls on the frontier between the GDR and West Berlin and West Germany. The SPD specifically states that it cannot regard this as a normal frontier between two different states.
2. The GDR should not insist upon its 'sovereign rights' but should reject such rights in the cause of 'humanitarian measures'.
3. The GDR should see to it that in 'its area of responsibility', the life of people in divided Germany should be made as easy as possible.
4. Restrictions on free exchanges in the field of trade, science and culture should be eased.

The Socialist Unity Party of the GDR based all of its suggestions on the fact that no real progress could be made until the two German states could agree to negotiate with each other on a basis of equality; even some of the 'small steps' proposed by the SPD, welcome as they might well be, could be implemented only by top-level agreements between official representatives of the two German states. The GDR suggestions for the next steps included the following:

1. The two German states should renounce nuclear weapons.
2. Concrete steps towards disarmament should be agreed upon.
3. The West German Federal Republic should recognise the existing frontiers in Europe.
4. The two German states should negotiate with each other on a footing of equality to dismantle the Cold War.

Replying to the specific demands of the SPD for a relaxation of the frontier protection measures taken in 1961 by the German Democratic Republic, the SED stated: 'We do not intend to take even the smallest step which could encourage the revanchists and militarists in Bonn, and which could help their claims to be the sole representatives of Germany'.

Even this short and necessarily incomplete summary of the positions of the two sides demonstrates that there is still a very big gap to be bridged before any concrete progress may be expected; and no responsible politician in either of the two German states expects sensational progress to be made within the next few weeks or even months. What is vitally important about the modest beginnings of a German Dialogue is that contact is being made, and some lines

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of communication are being restored. As *The Times* stated in a leading article on May 6:

> Inevitably the process of renewing contact between two halves of a long divided country will be slow and fraught with dangers and misunderstandings. The main thing is that it seems to be beginning.

One obstacle towards progress which should certainly not be overlooked is the fact that the leaders of the West German SPD have an ambivalent attitude towards the coming talks. On one hand they would like to be able to go forward to the next West German general elections with the proud cry that they have been able to do something to get the German problem out of the blind alley; but at the same time they are mortally afraid of charges from Chancellor Erhard's Christian Democrats that they have stabbed 'free western democracy' in the back by talking to the devilish Communists. And the demonification of 'the Reds' in the eyes of very large sections of the West German population should not be under-estimated; after all they have been exposed to a heavy diet of anti-Communist propaganda almost without a break since 1933.

One factor needs to be stressed, particularly in view of the fact that many nations and governments in both eastern and western Europe have no particularly avid wish for the re-creation of a unified Germany of whatever colour and system, even if the present German Dialogue should be successful beyond the wildest hopes, a German re-unification is not on the cards for many years to come, and will certainly not come about as long as such a united Germany could be the slightest threat to the peace of the world.

What the statesmen of the GDR are working for in the immediate future is a stabilisation and general acceptance of the present and the very real existence in the centre of Europe of two independent German states. The mere acceptance of this undeniable fact would be a big step forward, for the present treatment of the German Democratic Republic as a 'hole in the map', urged by the Bonn Government, and acquiesced in by the British Government and other Western nations, gives West Germany a lever to interfere with almost any move towards *detente*. It should not be forgotten that the West German Government tried to upset the Nuclear Test Ban because the GDR had already announced its adherence.

And the British Labour Party could of course help in the development towards realism if it were to implement, now that it is in power, the decision of its 1961 Annual Conference which stated: 'The western powers . . . could accept a measure of *de facto* recognition of East Germany'.

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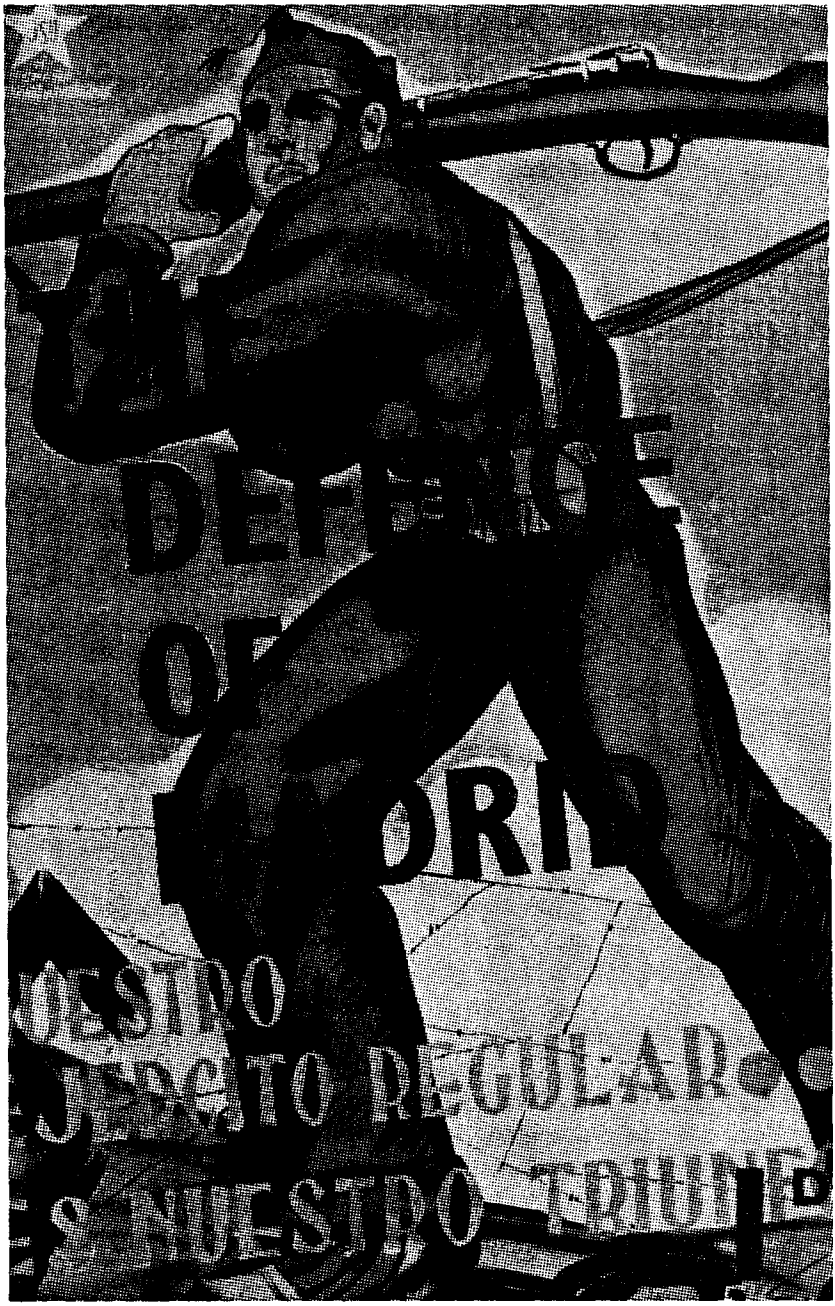

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FASCIST WAR ON THE SPANISH PEOPLE, JULY 1936

'THE struggle in Spain has been watched with bated breath by all freedom-loving youth in Britain. Long ago it ceased to be a civil war. It is an invasion of democratic Spain by the Fascist armies of Hitler and Mussolini armed with all the latest modern weapons. This invasion has been assisted by the criminal policy of "non-intervention" maintained by the National Government, which has denied democratic Spain the means to defend herself. By its action towards Spain the National Government stands condemned as the enemy of democracy and the friend of Fascism.

But you can't kill freedom! With heroism and courage which has moved the whole world the Spanish People have fought back—a profound, moving example of the unshakable will of a people struggling for freedom. The tales of heroism and dauntless courage are legion; out of the din and fire of battle and the ruins of the bloody fascist air raids has come the new People's Army of Spain—an army invincible, an army of democracy.'

Thus wrote John Gollan, then Secretary of the Young Communist League of Great Britain, in the Pamphlet whose cover we reproduce on the opposite page. This same Pamphlet ends with the words of the General Secretary of the United Youth of Madrid, city of fame and undying heroism:

'Madrid is suffering in these moments the most ferocious attacks of the whole campaign . . . We have said to the military members of the United Socialist Youth, "before we take one step, before yielding an inch of territory, death! From the trenches, from the parapets, we do not emerge unless dead or wounded, or to advance!" . . . By saving Madrid we save Spain, in order to give youth a new Spain of Happiness and Liberty.'

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THE OTHER WAR — LAOS

Ivor Montagu

WHAT is a war? How big does it have to be before it qualifies? Most people are aware that U.S. intervention has brought one bloody war to S.E. Asia—in Vietnam. Every few days news comes of overspill; U.S. helicopters have sprayed bullets over the Cambodian frontier or U.S. fighters have machined-gunned Chinese fishermen in the Bay of Tongking. Few people are aware that alongside the big war in Vietnam that hits the headlines, another bloody conflict of intervention is being waged, equally ruthless, equally in violation of solemn international obligations, and has been going on for almost as long, in Laos. Few people, that is, except the Laos.

Laotian geography is something like this. To the north lie Burma and China, to the south Cambodia. The ancient kingdom of Laos makes up a strip, mostly mountain and forest, running from north to south between Thailand on the west and Vietnam on the east. There are about 3 million inhabitants made up of a variety of nationalities. One group, the Lao Loum, inhabits mainly the cultivable plains and river banks, as well as towns and villages along the few roads; its society was mainly feudal. Two others, the Lao Theung and Lao Soung dwell in forests and mountain tops; their society is still tribal. It was the career of the French, as it is now of the Americans, to set tribe against tribe. When French rule ended, 95 per cent of the population were illiterate and, in some areas, 75 per cent riddled with opium. The parties of the right, mainly consisting of feudal lords, military chiefs and merchants dependent on U.S. trade and aid and constantly reinforced from Thailand hold a narrow fringe along the Thai frontier, hardly anywhere more than a few miles wide, but including several towns, among them the capital Vientiane and the royal seat Luang Prabang. The vast majority of the country, an area much wider than the right-wing western fringe and in shape not unlike the whole, is either liberated territory administered by the Neo Lao Haksat, whose chairman is Prince Souphannouvong and which roughly corresponds to the National Front of Liberation in South Vietnam or the administration in North Vietnam in being the standard bearer of independence, agrarian, education and health service reforms; or else that occupied by 'neutralists', either the followers of Prince Souvanna Phouma or once Captain, now General, Kong Le ('Neutralist' in the Lao sense is not

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a term of international politics, it means 'neutral' as between the parties of the right and the Neo Lao Haksat—better said, swinging to one and then the other).

Occasionally the world press refers to what it calls the 'Ho Chi Minh Trail', an alleged supply line by which North Vietnamese regulars are supposed to send reinforcements or carry munitions, on mule-back or bicycle, down the east of Laos to the South Vietnamese National Front of Liberation. It appears to be taken for granted that the U.S. knights of the air, in searching for this 'trail' are entitled to bomb anyone or anything, over any frontier, that happens in the way. But this is not at all a correct picture. Only the southern extremity of the Laotian-Vietnamese frontier, less than one quarter of its length, marches with South Vietnam, and the merciless attacks against Laos have extended against the whole neutralist and, of course principally, the liberated area. For example, though Hanoi and Haiphong themselves have so far been exempt from aerial attack, the region near Sam Neua, principal Neo Lao Haksat city, in the north roughly on a latitude with these North Vietnamese cities, was heavily attacked with napalm on April 19, April 27 and May 10 of this year.

Quite recently, on the second anniversary of the start of U.S. air bombing, which began on May 19, 1964, the Laotian People's Liberation Army high command issued a balance sheet. In these two years Laos has been bombed by T-28s and Skyraiders, by F-100s, F-101s, F-102s, F-105s, F-44s. Now B-52s have joined in. The aircraft have come from bases in Thailand and South Vietnam and from carriers of the Seventh Fleet. They have bombed towns and villages, schools, hospitals and temples. They have fired shells and rockets. They have dropped time-bombs, napalm, phosphorus bombs and poisonous chemicals. At first the bombing and machine-gunning was done at intervals of a few days between, then every day, now it is day and night. At first the attacks involved batches of 5 to 10 planes. Later they increased, to number from 50 to 100 sorties a day, from 100 to more than a 1,000 a month. This April the B-52s dropped thousands of tons of bombs in three central provinces alone. Quite apart from the offensives of rightist forces armed and financed by USA and led by U.S. officers, there have been at least three large offensives from Thailand, constant parachutist attacks from South Vietnam in the region west of Da Nang and at least one co-ordinated pincer attack simultaneously from Thailand and South Vietnam designed to break up the PLA areas in the south of Laos

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and cut the country in two. All have failed. The PLA high command counts 370 U.S. aircraft brought down, many others damaged, pilots from USA, Thailand and Taiwan captured, some 11,000 of the troops sent against them killed, 8,000 captured or come over, tons of arms and ammunition taken.

Does this qualify as a war? It is perhaps time to notice.

No, the U.S. military operations against Laos are only incidentally and geographically connected with the war in Vietnam, not its by-product. Essentially they are part of the whole policy of the world *imperium Americanum* (initiated by Dulles and pursued without interruption till Johnson), the determination in South-East Asia to wipe out the Geneva agreements assuring an independent, neutral future for the region, to bolster up a regime of feudalists and compradores who would hold wide open the door for U.S. economic exploitation and maintain bases for U.S. forward strategy.

Wilson and Stewart are fond of quoting law. After Dulles had walked out of the Geneva conference of 1954, Bedell Smith, who replaced him as head of the U.S. delegation, pledged that although the U.S. government did not agree with the treaties reached it would 'refrain from the threat or use of force to disturb them'. But this careful phrase must be understood in connection with President Eisenhower's comment the next day: 'The United States is not a party to the decisions taken by the conference and will not be bound by them.' Where does aggression begin, and from which party, if you work unceasingly, with arms, cash and through the hands of puppets, to upset the treaties, and the others defend them in the only way they can? Escalation does the rest.

The story of the destruction of the treaties in Laos parallels the now more familar sequence of events in Vietnam. In Vietnam a temporary administrative division was agreed, north for the liberation forces, south for their opponents, both parts to be free of foreign alliance and exempt from intervention, the future to be settled by elections in a few months. The Americans at once replaced the French as military advisers in the south, installed a puppet brought from USA, encouraged him—with acquiesence of Geneva Conference co-chairman Eden—to replace the unifying elections and silence by slaughter every dissentient voice. The coalition that sought to save their lives by armed resistance became henceforward damned as 'communist aggressors'.

In Laos a different solution was prescribed. Instead of temporary division of the country, the liberated three-fifths of the country was

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to combine with the rest, a coalition government of all forces to be formed—under the traditional throne—elections, guarantees of neutrality, foreign aid, an international supervisory commission, etc., all these were promised. Precisely this is now canvassed by some well-meaning supporters of negotiation as a solution to the struggle in South Vietnam. *But this is where, after Geneva, the story in Laos began.*

What went wrong? What is the lesson to be learned? Simply that none of this can work where there is a U.S. military presence, U.S. money to corrupt, a U.S. government policy and U.S. agencies bent on wrecking any form of all-in national government that can result in independence and neutralism in the diplomatic sense—and while the other western powers charged with supervising implementation of agreement, are so pusillanimous as to swallow every violation.

In Laos intervention began at once. On the morrow of the Geneva agreement of 1954, in direct contradiction of the accords, U.S. military advisers replaced the French; General Collins arrived in March 1955, Admiral Radford in July the same year. Within a few months the rightist generals were pushing an offensive into the northern liberated areas (International Control Commission report April, 1956) and by the next year Seato adopted Laos (July 26, 1957) and the *Tribune des Nations* reported: 'Officially, American aid to Laos is running at 74 million dollars a year. This aid is apportioned as follows: 7 million for the police and State Security organisations, 7 million for the administration, 50 million for an army of 25,000 men and another 10 million for the keep of 250 American advisers and experts'.

The instructive circumstance in Laos is that not once but several times agreements were reached under popular pressure, and each time were breached under U.S. direction. In 1957 a Vientiane conference decided on integration of the Neo Lao Haksat and a government of National Union. In 1958 elections *were* held and resulted in triumph for the NLH. The U.S. Under-Secretary of Defence arrived in November, the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet the next February, and more experts and still more military 'advisers'. In 1959 the right-wing forces launched an attack on the north, burnt 40 villages, put 7,000 people in concentration camps, annihilated the two PLA battalions ready for integration in the national army under the agreement and arrested Prince Souphannouvong and one other NLH minister (Phoumi Vongvichit).

So unpopular was this putsch, that all the guards in the camp in which the two ministers were confined, together with the ministers,

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escaped and succeeded in reaching liberated territory, and a large part of the army, under Captain Kong Le, refused to follow the rightists and took up a 'neutralist' position with Prince Souvanna Phouma.

After four hard battles, in each of which they had U.S. support, the rightists failed, and the three Princes—Souvanna Phouma, Souphannouvong and the then leader of the right, U.S.-backed Bon Oum, met in 1961 in Zurich, in 1962 in the Plain of Jars, and finally at a new Geneva Conference once more agreement was reached, reiterating the principles of the first on the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Laos, with Souvanna Phouma as Prime Minister, and USA bending itself to refrain from every threat or exercise of force or interference in Laotian affairs. But this undertaking was perfectly consistent with an increase in the U.S. advisers—labelled U.S. Operations Mission, U.S. Information Service or 'Air America'—to number thousands, adding 'military experts' and commanders from the Philippines, South Vietnam, Japan and Thailand—the latter including infantry battalions and artillery brigades, and a more than doubling of the rightist army to 70,000 men trained and equipped with modern weapons. In 1963 the Foreign Minister, Quinim Pholsena, a neutralist, was assassinated by rightist troops in the capital, and in 1964 Souvanna Phouma made a prisoner in his own house. The big offensives by land and air against the liberated areas with U.S. air support now began avowedly (the U.S. Information Service reported on November 26, 1964, the U.S. ambassador at Vientiane as saying: 'Mr. McNamara, Secretary of Defence, has made it clear that our aircraft will continue flights over the territory as long as these prove necessary. This is a task we must undertake in the interest not only of the Lao government but of other countries as well'), and from this date Souvanna Phouma has functioned as little more than a mouthpiece of the right.

So the sad tale. Not all sad, however, for of course, as in Vietnam itself, and as, such fortunately is human nature (which the Dulleses and Johnsons of this world never seem to understand) the ranks of the resistance, under such pressure, grow only from strength to strength. When Johnson was serving his apprenticeship at foreign policy (under Kennedy) he distributed ball-point pens and invited camel-drivers to Washington. Napalm and lazy dog are not more effective ways of winning friends.

The 10 points of the NLH Congress (see Appendix), adopted April 10, 1964, which of course the uncomprehending Americans call 'Communist', are so all-embracing, must appear so generous, so in

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correspondence with the desires of every patriot Lao, that no 'political warfare' can possibly provide an alternative. It is significant that the aim of the struggle is, as in Vietnam, declared precisely to be the implementation of Geneva, which the Americans repudiate, the restoring of national unity, not sectional advantage. Just as it is comprehensible why, with such an experience as the last dozen years, one demand is proved as the key without which nothing else, certainly not peace, is realisable—the withdrawal of the USA. The only way U.S. forces can succeed in staying in South-East Asia is, as the world is beginning to realise, by total genocide, and this, as it becomes realised, the world, and perhaps first of all enough of the U.S. people themselves, will not allow.

Seventeen years ago I was sitting with some friends in a Vietnamese restaurant in Paris, and a young, plump, blond, wealthy American opened a conversation with us. The war was not long over, and his country, A-Bomb equipped, had emerged the most powerful on earth. 'It's a terrible responsibility', he complained, 'to have to rule the earth'. And an impossibility, which is the lesson Solomon must learn, and we must help to teach.

APPENDIX

THREE OF THE TEN POINTS OF THE NEO LAO HAKSAT PROGRAMME FOR LAOS, adopted at its 2nd National Congress, are here given:

1. Strengthen the union of the whole Lao people without distinction of social conditions, sex, age, ethnic origin, religion, political orientation. The solid national bloc embraces alike representative persons, members of the royal family, patriot intellectuals, priests and other religious persons of peace and neutrality as well as all organisations and individuals who, hitherto coerced into following the American imperialists and their lackeys, opt now for peace and neutrality; increase and consolidate the alliance and mutual aid between Neo Lao Haksat and the patriot neutralist forces to make Laos a country truly peaceful, neutral, independent, democratic, united and prosperous.
2. Carry on energetic and persistent struggle against the American imperialist aggressors and the traitors in their pay, insist that they faithfully and completely carry out the Geneva Agreements, the Joint Communiques of Zurich and the Plain of Jars and the other agreements between the three parties; safeguard and consolidate the Tripartite Government of National Union, put it in a position fully to achieve its political programme of re-establishing peace, realising national harmony and strengthening the independence of the country; as immediate measure, insist that the American imperialists and their lackeys withdraw from Laos all their

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troops, military personnel and war materials, stop any new introduction of weapons and war material, abandon all interference of whatever kind in the internal affairs of Laos, liquidate their existing military bases in Laos and renounce the building of any others; demand that the Souvanna Khet[1] party at once stop its acts of repression against the population and its attempts to invade the liberated zone, that the withdrawal of troops to their respective positions at the moment of signature of the Geneva Agreements of 1962 be carried out, and all the agreements signed between the three parties, in particular the formation of a corps of mixed police and the immediate neutralisation of Vientiane[2] and Luang Prabang[3] be fully executed, to enable the normal activities of the Government of National Union to be resumed as well as the Tripartite negotiations to solve the problems in suspense and other problems of national interest.

3. Realise the policy of peace and neutrality recognised by the Geneva Agreements of 1962, firmly maintain an independent foreign policy based on the 5 principles of peaceful co-existence, establish diplomatic relations with all countries on a basis of equality, receive aid without strings from any country desiring to keep Laos in its national construction on the basis of recognition and respect for the sovereignty and national independence of Laos; support all movements of struggle for peace, democracy and social progress; energetically support the Afro-Asian and Latin-American peoples' movement for national independence, actively contribute to the defence of peace in South-East Asia and throughout the world.

[1]A right-wing party named after the province in central Laos.
[2]The Capital.
[3]The Royal Seat.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

INTERNATIONAL UNITY IN ACTION

One feature of the general strike that has not been sufficiently emphasised is the unexampled display of international solidarity to which it gave rise. Recognition of the solidarity of the workers here has not been wanting: it does not seem to be fully realised that their marvellous, almost automatic solidarity, was exactly paralleled by the solidarity of the workers in every country with the British general strike.

From the first day of the strike onwards telegrams from the four corners of the earth poured in, in an ever-increasing stream, to the General Council . . . In a day and a night, it seemed, the supreme battle-cry of the working class, 'Workers of the world, unite!', had been translated into actual living fact. And it is worth noting that, since the struggle in Britain was conducted by the trade unions, so the international unity which sprang up to support it was essentially trade union unity. For near two years now, the campaign for international trade union unity has pursued its varied course—on the whole a campaign of leaders, and not of the masses. Suddenly the British general strike brought the issue right down among the masses, who actually realised international unity in action.

(From 'The World of Labour', *Labour Monthly*, July, 1926.)

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THE RENT ACT FIASCO

Tom Vernon *

WITHIN six months of its coming into force the Labour Government's new Rent Act is widely seen to be a failure. Tenants are not using it to get their rents modified. They have no confidence in it. Of course, the Act's provisions as to security of tenure cannot but be effective seeing that they define what dwellings are protected and call for no action to implement them.

Such tenants as are aware of the 1965 Rent Act and its relation to their own situation are mainly scared to take any action to invoke the benefits supposedly available to them. People in a position to advise tenants shrink from the responsibility of suggesting use of the rent fixing machinery. For the anticipation is now widespread that the outcome of an initiative to get a rent revised is as likely to result in an increase as in a reduction—indeed, that a rise is the more likely. Though the facts so far available suggest that this anticipation is a bit too pessimistic, the reality is that people think the Act can so easily worsen their position that they resolve to do nothing. For them, this Act is a dead letter. Much as the Public Health Act is a dead letter so far as action under it requires the initiative of a tenant as the first step.

Already there is abundant justification for tenants' fears. Mr. Frank Allaun, MP (House of Commons, May 24), extracted some telling figures from the Ministry of Housing as to rent determinations by Rent officers in London and each provincial rent office. From February 3, 1966, up to May 14, rent officers in thirty-three boroughs of the London Panel Area (stretching to Croydon, Waltham Forest, Harrow and Ealing) made merely 2,793 determinations. Of these, 1,871 gave rent reductions and 528 rent increases. The balance of 394 cases were ones where rents were unchanged, but these included rent registrations supported by Fair Rent Certificates which reflect prior agreements by owners with rent officers respecting new or re-constructed properties, i.e. where no dispute was involved.

In Westminster (now including St. Marylebone and Paddington, both areas of high-powered landlordism) an insignificant total of 57 rents were reduced in a period of nearly 19 weeks, and 42 increased. In Camden (including Hampstead, the Landlords' paradise) 47 rents were reduced and 14 increased. In Kensington and Chelsea, there

* Councillor Vernon is President of the National Association of Tenants and Residents.

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were 74 reductions and 72 increases! The provincial figures give no different picture.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. James MacColl, regards the Act 'as a triumph' (H. of C., May 13). He added that 'Relations between landlord and tenant are already improving. That was the object of the Act'. How naive we were to think the object was to eliminate the evils of the 1957 Rent Act!

The number of cases in rent officers' hands not yet determined is something like three to four times the number settled. One hears that rent officers are so shattered by the reversal of their decisions at the hands of the higher-level rent assessment committees that they are crouching in their offices paralysed by uncertainty, waiting to see if they can glean more idea of what a fair rent is by seeing more decisions emerge from the committees. If so, their independence of judgment is already undermined.

It seems clear that landlords are now very ready to dash off to the rent assessment committee to seek a reversal of any rent officer's decision adverse to their interests. It looks as if the outcome could well be most satisfactory for them. Of the very earliest cases settled by committees, in seven, rent officers' findings were overruled in favour of the landlords. In two other cases, there was no overruling though the tenants were worsted anyhow. Cases have been reported in the House of Commons where landlords have been awarded rents in excess of that they asked for.

We have now been instructed by such a panjandrum as Sir Sydney Littlewood, president of the Greater London Rent Assessment Panel, that fair rents may very well prove to be, not below, but above present rents. Despite his quasi-judicial role, Sir Sydney was being regaled at a luncheon by the Association of Land and Property Owners when he made this pronouncement. He explained that 'the object of the Rent Act is to get a fair rent and not a subsidised rent' and thus airily disposed of the criticisms that the assessment committees were not doing their job properly. What, may we ask, is a subsidised rent? Seemingly, any rent much below a landlord's expectation. In fact, any rent below what could be got on the open market if there were no control over rents, for no landlord can see any reason why his line of business in a capitalist system should be singled out for exclusion from the fullest benefit from its customary law. Hence, many of the new supposedly fair rents will be 'subsidised' ones and undeserving of Sir Sydney Littlewood's approval.

The deep misgiving about Mr. Crossman's plan for 'flexible rents'

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and the utterly vague formula for determining fair rents which so many felt when this Act was a Bill has not disappeared. Quite the contrary. Indeed, the more one sees of his Rent Act in operation (both as to rent fixing and illegal eviction) the more one must regard it as a piece of legislative buffoonery.

According to the White Paper preceding the Bill (Cmnd. 2622) a fair rent is to be settled 'without regard for the effect of scarcity on existing rent levels' (para 19). Further, that consideration of scarcity is to be 'eliminated'. This was to be done by an assumption that the number of people seeking dwellings of any particular kind equalled the supply. That would be to 'eliminate' any factor of scarcity, clearly. But the Act says that the number of persons is assumed not to be *substantially* greater. Hence, there can be some degree of excess of persons provided it is not 'substantial'. In other words, some degree of scarcity! As the word substantial is imprecise, a magnificent 'out' has been given the pundits.

On April 28, in the case of an Islington flat, the chairman of the Rent Assessment Committee, Sir George Bull, overruled the rent officer's determination of a rent of £3 17s 6d (in place of the existing £7) and made it £5 15s 'bearing in mind that this is a rising district and also taking into account the scarcity element'. Answering an objection that scarcity was not to be taken into account, Sir George asserted that the Act did not say that scarcity should be wholly disregarded. 'The word "substantially" must mean something. It is intended to qualify.' So, to some unknown extent he did regard scarcity, though not 'wholly'. As chess players say, Knight's Game!

Aside from the mystification over scarcity and how much in any rent determination may be attributed to that factor, there is need to consider 'state of repair'. This would seem to require an exhaustive survey—and by no amateur such as a rent officer is—followed by a speculative rumination over what the complex of circumstances of repair and disrepair might mean in terms of less or more rent. After that comes 'the age, character and locality' of the dwelling to be thought about and their significance rentwise established. These abstruse ponderings have to be primarily undertaken by the rent officer, emphatically no expert, with the tenant and the landlord contributing what they may in the realm of guesswork to help the good work.

All this is so much mumbo-jumbo to give a pseudo-factual basis to a rent officer's, or an assessment committee's, sheer guess as to a fair rent. Guesses will be different from one area to another, from one case to another indeed. Determinations of rent at this first stage of

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the Act's crazy history will, unfortunately, set up certain standards through reference to the local registers of rents. A 'tone' of rents will come into being. There will be conformity and harmony within a framework of rent values which are mere opinions posing as authoritative and objective findings of fact and so the system of 'flexible rents' may acquire the kind of false prestige possessed for a similar bad reason by the discredited rating system.

The Act being what it is, and facts what they are, no results can emerge which are other than irrational and arbitrary. We can see now what a fraud this Act is and how it works. Even were the Act not as bad as I assert, it would fail on account of the need for individual action by tenants to get a fair rent determined where an existing rent is at a level where a reduction would be due. A tenant has to get hold of an official form and master its complications, take time off to see a rent officer and prepare himself to face his landlord and probably a skilled surveyor or lawyer. From all experience (especially over disrepairs) it is unrealistic to expect any but a small minority of tenants to act. Aside from that deep-rooted fact, the experience of tenants within these first six months of the Act's existence has been such as to inhibit tenants' initiative.

The fear of eviction if anything is attempted contrary to the landlord's interests is very deep. The 1965 Act will not change it. A landlord can still evict his tenant without Court Order and the police will not interfere save in the case of a disturbance brought about by a resisting tenant, i.e. the police will not apprehend the landlord or his bailiff or toughs as if they were thieves caught in the act. If someone is interested enough to inform the local council of what has happened then a prosecution might follow. But no power exists to put the evicted tenant back in his home.

Not long before becoming Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Wilson remarked that 'the plain fact is that rented housing is not a proper field for private profit' (Leeds, February 9, 1964). It is for that reason that a Socialist policy on rents demands social ownership of rented housing. There is no way of reconciling the opposed interests of private ownership in a capitalist system and a social policy requiring minimum rents for good homes kept in decent repair for the mass of the people. The 1965 Rent Act, or any genuine improvement to it, cannot overcome the contradiction.

The course for organised tenants, and for the Labour Party I trust, is to resume the demand for public ownership of rented housing. That aim achieved, we can then have a social policy on rents.

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BOILERMAKERS' CONFERENCE

Finlay Hart

HELD in the Central Pier Hall, Morecambe, at the end of May, the Fourteenth Delegate Conference of the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers rivalled the Fire Brigades Union, held in Morecambe during the same week, for its militancy on economic issues. But it failed to maintain its reputation as a Left union on foreign affairs.

The tone was set from the start by the first elected President of the Amalgamation, Daniel McGarvie. While welcoming the return of a Labour Government he declared:

> Our organisation has never been, nor is it today, a trade union which remains silent when criticism is necessary. We shall continue to criticise when we think the Government is committed to policies which are wrong.

He then proceeded to criticise Government policy on the Prices and Incomes Bill.

> I am not convinced that it should be placed on the Statute Book. On the contrary, I believe it should be withdrawn . . . The interpretation of a law depends not upon the Government which originally passed it, but on judges both now and in the future.

Dealing with Planning, he said that to be effective 'the Government should control, at the very least, the commanding heights of the economy. For this reason, the extension of social ownership is very relevant to the fulfilment of the national plan'.

Being held just subsequent to the publication of the Geddes Report on Shipbuilding, the Conference had a long debate on the future of that industry and the role of the Amalgamation. The Executive Committee moved a resolution that 'this Conference re-affirms its determination to do everything possible to have the shipbuilding industry brought under public ownership'. It further declared that our policy of 'interchangeability' within the various crafts and sections of the Amalgamated Society, with additional payments to all our members concerned, can be of tremendous assistance in equipping the industry to compete more favourably with international competition. Along with the resolution the debate included the section of the Executive Council's report dealing with the Geddes Report and a scheme submitted by the EC to the Apprentices Training Board to have their section within the Society in place of the present eight.

Naturally, within such a wide range of subjects there was bound

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to be many divergent views and a somewhat inconclusive termination to the debate. The seconder of the motion and others declared their outright opposition to Geddes, saying that no matter how theoretically correct some of the Geddes proposals might be, so long as the industry was left in the hands of those whom the Geddes Committee had so severely indicted, the problems of the industry would not be solved. They emphasised the point in the EC resolution to have the industry brought under public ownership.

The spokesman for the EC argued that when the industry was reorganised as suggested by Geddes, it would be easier to nationalise; there would be more opportunities for a new start in the relations between the unions and the employers and that the Amalgamation would face up to its responsibilities. So, no clear lead was given to the membership in the difficulties that the application of the Geddes proposals will undoubtedly bring.

A somewhat confusing position arose in the debate on wages. Twelve resolutions and two amendments condemned the package deals in engineering and shipbuilding: demanded a higher minimum rate, consultation with the membership and retrospective payments. The debate took place around four composite motions, all of which were finally remitted to the Executive Committee, with the assurance that the EC would look symphathetically at all the points that were made in the debate.

But there was no doubt where the Conference stood on the question of Trade Union Legislation and the Incomes Policy. The resolution submitted by the Executive Council stated:

> This Conference rejects completely the introduction of restrictive Trade Union Legislation by any Government and demands that the democratic rights of free collective bargaining by the trade unions shall be continued.

A somewhat feeble opposition tried to defend the Government's position on this and on all other proposals that came before the Conference that were critical of the Government's policy. A resolution was submitted supporting the Government's incomes policy immediately following the debate on Trade Union Legislation but was decisively defeated.

An emergency motion pledging full support to the seamen and empowering the EC to give financial assistance was overwhelmingly carried against a small minority who urged that in the interest of the economy of the country conciliation should quickly take place.

On foreign policy questions previous conferences have been noted for their support for the activities of those left-wing MPs who were for nuclear disarmament, against arming the Germans, etc. This

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Conference opposed restrictions to trade by Nato and Seato agreements, demanded the withdrawal of the Government's White Paper on Immigration, demanded a drastic cut in arms expenditure and reaffirmed its previous decisions of 'no bases in this country'.

There were nine resolutions on Vietnam composited to read:

> This Conference calls upon the British Government to disassociate itself from American policy in Vietnam and to strive for the implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements and to use all its influence to obtain an immediate cessation of bombing in Vietnam.
>
> We also urge our Government to support all efforts to obtain the withdrawal of American forces in Vietnam and to allow free elections to take place throughout the country.

On a show of hands the resolution was defeated. The opposition was able to win a majority of the Conference by showing that the delegation at the Labour Party Conference had voted in favour of the official Labour policy, that claimed if we disassociate ourselves from the Americans we shall lose whatever influence we have for peace. They maintained the resolution was an attack on the Government and appealed to the loyalty of the members in support of the Government. The sponsors of the composite took it for granted that with the support of the Executive Committee the resolution would be carried and did not carry the fight on to the Conference floor as they could have done. It is true that it was the last item on the Agenda on the closing day of Conference, but that does not excuse those of us who recognise that world peace may depend upon the implementation of the policies contained in the composite motion.

Conference called for a new national superannuation plan and the immediate cessation of the present graduation pension scheme. It asked that all safety officers in industry be paid by and responsible to the Government, because of the concern about accidents at work, and demanded an industrial health service.

There is growing impatience at the delay in getting three weeks' annual holiday. The Conference demanded 'the immediate expansion of all social services and called upon the Government to implement the promises made in their election manifesto'. The cost of this expansion, they claimed, could be met by drastic cuts in arms expenditure and an increase in taxation of the citadels of high finance.

The demand was made for comprehensive education and the full integration of all schools. While the Conference congratulated the Labour Government on the achievements of their first eighteen months in office, it also called on the Prime Minister to ensure that the full socialist policy is fulfilled in the shortest possible time.

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In the interval between now and the next Conference in 1968, the members of the Amalgamated Society will be faced with a number of sharp problems internally and externally. So long as they do not let blind loyalty affect their better judgment, they will have a big part to play in the British working class movement. In spite of certain hesitations and weakness, the Fourteenth Conference revealed that the militancy of its members is its safeguard for the future.

ELEANOR MARX

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UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF ELEANOR MARX TO FREDERICK ENGELS

(The letters from Eleanor Marx to Frederick Engels, of which a first instalment is printed below, were first published in the historical journal, Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft, *in the German Democratic Republic. They have been kindly placed at our disposal by the Institute for Marxism-Leninism of the German Democratic Republic, whose Deputy Director, H. Gemkow, wrote for them a full introduction of which use is made below. The photostats of the original letters (in English) from which they are reproduced were supplied by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the USSR*—Ed., LM)

THE Congresses of the French Socialists at Lille and of the German Social-Democrats at Halle, which Eleanor Marx attended (accompanied at Lille by her husband Edward Aveling), took place at a critical time in the international working class movement. The 'Possibilists', or opportunists, were very active in Belgium and France, while among the German Socialists (who had only recently emerged from eleven years' illegality, though with brilliant electoral successes the previous February) there was also an opportunist trend, notably among the MPs. It was quite likely to make common cause with the 'Possibilists'. The foundation Congress of the Second International, a year before, had already been less representative than it could have been owing to the 'Possibilists' ' efforts; and there was once more a danger of two international Congresses meeting—a 'Possibilist' one at Brussels and a Marxist one elsewhere. The British Social-Democratic Federation led by Hyndman, and the British TUC, were supporting the 'Possibilists'.

By agreement between Frederick Engels and the Marxist leaders of the French and German Socialists—Guesde, Lafargue and Bebel—Eleanor went to both Congresses to ensure if possible that the 'Possibilists' did not succeed, i.e. that the Marxist parties should also attend at Brussels. Engels also secured the attendance of Marxists from other countries at Halle to discuss the situation, including Guesde after his own Congress.

Eleanor Marx's letters show that Engels' suggestions were endorsed by all concerned; and this success was due in no small measure to Eleanor's political understanding and tact, the fruit of years of experience at her father's side and as a propagandist and organiser in the British labour movement. **—A.F.R.**

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Hotel Goldne Kugel *Halle a. S. den*
F. W. Fischmann *14. Oct., 1890*

My dear General,

I have just got back from the afternoon sitting, and have what I may fairly call the first really quiet moment I've had since we left London on Friday night. What with the travelling, the Congresses, and the private talks I am quite bewildered.

We left London as you know on Friday, and reached Lille at 3 o'clock in the morning. At 9 we were at the Hall of the Congress. Our attending was, I think, good in many ways. It made—so all of them said—an excellent impression, and in private I fancy, we were of some use too. As to the Congress, I am bound to say it was really admirable, and never would I have believed, unless I had been present, that 64 Frenchmen could be so quiet, talk so very little, whenever they did talk, talk strictly to the point, in the most business like fashion without even a hint at high falutin' (though such talking as there was, was excellent from even the oratorical point of view), that they could be so absolutely unanimous on nearly all questions and on the whole so very clear-headed and theoretically so free from anything like muddle. But I saw, and so I believed. In those two days an immense amount of work was got through, and that without a single hitch. The feeling was evidently one of perfect confidence all round. What a contrast to the Brousse-Allemane[1] Congresses!—The two questions that I had rather dreaded were the one as to the Brussels Congress, and the 'Universal Strike'. On the first question, there were less difficulties than I fancied there'd be. Of course the bitterness against the Possibilists is immense, but the facts were very well put by Guesde and Lafargue to them, and the decision to go to Brussels (with such provisos as you yourself suggested) unanimously agreed to.—The 'Universal Strike' business called forth more discussion than any other question. Happily the 'Revolution' was not decreed—only 5 out of the 64 delegates voting for the Resolution.—But think of my horror, General, when huge placards on the Lille walls calling a meeting with a large white slip pasted across, stared me in the face with the following announcement 'Sous la présidence de Eleanor Marx Aveling'! I felt mightily inclined to clear out—but couldn't very well, and the meeting went off all right under my 'présidence'. But 'twas a mean trick to play me.—After the meeting (where Edward spoke a few words in English, and where I saw once again what born speakers the Frenchmen are,) we adjourned to a very charming and very jolly 'banquet' at 1 franc a head! We tried to get off as early as we could, but it was past twelve before we were back at the Hotel. As I was to leave at 3.5 I only lay down on the bed for a little rest. Then at 3.5 I met Guesde, Ferroul[2] and a young man or rather lad (whose name neither I nor Guesde who is looking after him know) and whom Guesde has brought here to find a situation!—and after getting our various belongings together started on our long journey.

My dear General, the Frenchies were very nice and very charming on the whole, but if ever I travel in 'foreign parts' with one—let alone three again, may I be damned. I would rather travel with two babies in arms and half a dozen others. They couldn't be more helpless and wouldn't be nearly so troublesome. We were very jolly though, and laughed not a little—especially at our absolute inability to

[1] Leaders of the 'Possibilists'.

[2] A French Socialist MP, a doctor by profession (1853-1921).

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keep awake in Belgium. We all tried. Impossible. Not till we were out of Belgium did we manage to wake up. Of the details of our long journey I will tell you more when I get back. At about 12.30 we got to Cologne. I sat my three Frenchmen down to their déjeuner—which they had been clamouring for, and which I think they would have cried for if they had not got soon—and went off to get their luggage—I only, of course, carried my small bag and your portmanteau—to have it re-registered for Halle, and to get our tickets for Halle. Of course this took some time—but there was plenty of time to catch the 12 train by which we had arranged to go on. I would have been quite content to forgo a big déjeuner and take a 'snack' with me in the train. But my charges weren't nearly 'through', and the waiter had persuaded them that a 12.50 train would be far better. We still had three minutes after all this explaining—but I saw it was no good, and as a train really was to go at 12.50 I resigned myself to my fate and my déjeuner. But lo! when we went to the train we were told that it was not the one and that our tickets were for another route! So after much running about—by me—neither of the other 3 dreamt of even going with me—I got the tickets changed and we started. For a time all was very jolly—we talked and laughed—and about every 5 minutes one of my three companions disappeared into the little lavatory attached to our carriage (They also got out at each station—and had the cheek to ask me to get out and show them where to go! ! !) till I wondered how on earth they managed it. But presently they began to get hungry. Now at one station where we stopped (at about 5.30) for 20 minutes all three were fast asleep, and I hadn't the heart to wake them. I regretted that later. They wanted something to eat. They nearly cried—or rather Guesde did, for Ferroul was much better—because they didn't stop long enough for me to get out and fetch 'des provisions' for them. I comforted them, and a conversation on hypnotism which Ferroul uses largely in his practice—distracted them for some time. Then at Cassel—at least I believe it was Cassel—we stayed and a boy appeared with 'Brötchen' and beer. I got all I could, but had to send a friendly guard for more and I felt relieved. But Guesde's protégé wasn't satisfied—railed at all and sundry and refused to eat. So the poor lad had to starve! But *I* couldn't help it. Well, on we went, and on, and as the three had smoked all day and had shivered even when the sun was broiling hot if I kept open a window, and as, when the sun went down they closed the ventilators, you can imagine what the air was like. I had a splitting headache and felt thankful when at 10 to 12 we reached Halle. I got my three out, and all their belongings out, and got their boxes (these had come by the 12 train) and then held council as to what should be done. I had telegraphed to Grothe from Cologne that we should arrive at 11 (thinking we should leave by the 12 train), and now it was midnight, and no Grothe[3] and no Genosse[4] of any sort was visible. Thinking rooms had probably been secured for us I suggested taking a cab and going to Jacobstrasse 2—the address sent me by Fischer.[5] We did get the cab and we started, but before very long our cabby—who was as drunk as Billy, turned round and requested me to tell him where the Jacobstrasse was. This was too much! I asked how on earth I, who had just

[3] Wilhelm Grothe, carpenter, Chairman of the Social-Democratic Party in Halle.
[4] 'Comrade'.
[5] Secretary of the EC of the German Social-Democratic Party.

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arrived, was to tell a Hallenser where the streets in his own town were. Thereupon the cabby swore by all his gods there *was* no such street. Another more or less intoxicated person in the street was appealed to; then another. Same answer from all. No such street in Halle. 'Take us to the first hotel you come to then' quoth I in despair. And presently we were deposited at the 'Goldne Kugel'. Think of our astonishment when this morning at the congress we heard that Bebel, Liebknecht,[6] Adler,[7] and some dozen others are all here too! But to return to my tale.—By this time my companions were famished—and no wonder, they'd only had a small 'Brötchen', and nothing since 12 in the morning. (I had supped full of the horror of the air in our railway carriage!) So I asked if we could get something to eat. No! It was too late. 'Can't we have *anything*, bread, cheese?' 'Nothing'. 'Not even a little bread?'. 'Impossible'! This struck me as so comic I roared with laughter, and laughed so that even my three hungry ones joined in—although they thought civilisation a failure in Germany at least. But the limit was when appearing with a Directory (I had casually asked the Kellner if *he* knew Jacobstrasse, and he didn't) he showed me that there *was* a Jacobstrasse but it contained only 2 houses—and so how could anyone know it, he asked?—Well, we drank a glass of beer and got to bed. (Bebel just fetched me to go to supper and a 'jollification' got up by the local folk.)

Wednesday morning. So to resume. Yesterday morning then we got up and after finding out where the congress sat, and having some coffee we set out for it. There, of course, we found everybody. The Hall is a large one, but it is very inadequate, and the people are packed so close we all feel and look like sardines. I mention that, because in spite of the very uncomfortable overcrowding the people are so quiet and attentive. There are 413 delegates (Bebel tells me he expected 250) and there are Anseele,[8] Nieuwenhuis,[9] Branting,[10] (Sweden), someone from Copenhagen, 1 from Switzerland, the Frenchies and myself. Duc Quercy[11] is also here for the 'Temps'.—Bebel at once told me that the opposition was already practically squashed. Werner had tried to get up a row the day before —i.e. the Monday, and 2 or 3 Berliners had supported him, but they were quite alone, and he believed Werner would now be deserted even by his remaining 2 or 3. And this was so. Not a hand was held up against Fischer's Resolution (the actual Resolutions you will of course see in the Volksblatt) and only Werner said he refrained from voting either way.—Yesterday on the main question really—the Report on the Parliamentary Fraktion—Werner alone spoke against, and such awful nonsense that I could hardly believe my own ears. Vollmar in a way tried also to support (not avowedly) Werner. But they are *hopelessly* beaten. Indeed there seemed practically nothing to beat. It is quite disappointing! I did think there'd be something of a fight. But how *can* 400 fight one?—And that's about what it comes to.—In the afternoon Guesde and Ferroul spoke admirably and produced a great effect.—Last night, to our relief, the Entertainment was so

[6] Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826-1900), German Social-Democratic leader.

[7] Victor Adler (1852-1918), Austrian Social-Democratic leader.

[8] Belgian Socialist leader, 1856-1938.

[9] One of the founders of the Dutch Social-Democratic Party, 1846-1919.

[10] Hjalmar Branting, 1860-1925.

[11] A founder of the French Partie Ouvrière.

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crowded, thousands—Bebel, Adler, Singer[12] among them—couldn't get in. So we had a quiet and most interesting talk. Tomorrow we have our International Conference. More, should anything important happen later on. Now I'm off to Congress. Love to you both. (If I sent you all the Grüsse[13] I'm told to I should fill a dozen pages with names.)

Yours
Tussy.

Wednesday

I am adding a line to say that the SDF has sent over a Resolution which is really an insult—full of good advice and hopes that the 'differences' will not 'dim the glory' of the 'spectacle of solidarity' the Germans have given, or check the movement etc. But probably you will see the thing in 'Justice'. Adler is translating it, and felt its insolence so much he was modifying it, but I said *no:* translate it as it is. I am certain the people will not be very pleased at this cool assumption of superior wisdom.—Werner is evidently done, but a man who in my opinion is infinitely more dangerous is Vollmar. [14] He is cleverer than Werner, and carefully avoids going too far, so saving his position and retaining a certain influence.—Liebknecht spent the whole of yesterday evening with Guesde and Ferroul, and as far as I can gather from Guesde lied hard. We were *all* to have met, but without letting any of us know Liebknecht sent word to the Frenchmen to meet him—not at the Hotel where we are all living, but at another. He evidently didn't want to have us present. However I don't think anything special can have been done.—This is immensely interesting—but *entre nous* I can't deny that the Germans are too much like the majority of the Liverpoolers—i.e. painfully respectable and middle-class looking. There *must* be a strong sprinkling of philistines among them. In this respect the Frenchmen seemed far better. Though, of course, there, there were 64, and here there are 417.—I have just been having a long talk with Adler—both about party matters and about the Kautskys. He says Luise is looking ten years younger, and is getting on very well. Adler is as witty as ever—and to hear him and Auer chaff one another is really delicious—for Auer is one of the most humorous people I have ever met. I have also had a long talk with Nieuwenhuis. He is still as mild as milk. Anseele, as I told you, I talked with yesterday. I may be quite wrong, but I always fancy—I fancied the same at Paris last year—he rather fights shy of us, and he always looks like a man who hasn't a very good conscience about something or other.

Good-bye again, dear General, Your
Tussy.

Nieuwenhuis and Adler (who know I'm just sending this off) send all sorts of messages. Neither Hyndmann [15] or Gilles[16] nor Schack[17] are here. Hyndman I expect did not care to come, when he heard from Bax[18] we should be here. As to Schack, she evidently intended to come, as Fischer says letters are here, addressed to her. What a blow to that lot! They who had hoped for a split, at least a serious quarrel—nothing now comes of it!

[12] Chairman of the German Social-Democrats' E. C. and of the Parliamentary Party.
[13] Greetings.
[14] One of the most determined opportunists in the German SDP in after years.
[15] Hyndman, 1842-1921.
[16] F. Gilles, German Journalist in London, exposed as a Police Agent in 1891 by the German Social-Democratic Newspaper.
[17] Countess Guillaume-Schack, who, from Berlin, went to England, 1886.
[18] Bax, 1854-1926.

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GREETINGS

1. From Friends in Britain

(*Readers will remember that last month we printed Greetings from:* ***Emrys Hughes, M.P; Sidney Silverman, M.P; Mrs. Renee Short, M.P; Cheddi Jagan, British Guiana; Stanley B. Ryerson, Canada; Malcolm Salmon, Australia.)***

JOHN BERGER:

For the 45th Anniversary of the foundation of *Labour Monthly* and for the 70th Birthday of R. Palme Dutt I wish to send congratulations and greetings. The journal is unique. Your editor is one of the great political analysts and polemicists of our time. In sending you greetings I am certain that I express the feelings of many thousands of readers. Yet your achievement cannot simply be measured in terms of our gratitude and goodwill. You have helped to form a body of knowledge which by virtue of its existence is available to all. This knowledge is not of the academic kind. It is a call and guide to action. It is the pre-requisite for successfully overturning the world of capital and commercial justice and for liberating a world of mutual aid and true justice. Such words in our small corner can have the ring of a false bravura. But in three-quarters of the world the overturning has either begun or is impatiently awaited. We are told at home that (national deficits apart) we live in a time of affluence and modernisation. In fact we live in an age of desperate and fearful triumphs. The imperialist powers can still plot, exploit and burn alive: but they can no longer subjugate a people. They face an entirely new historical factor: the final understanding among the exploited, the plotted against, the burned, of what has been done to them over the centuries. There is now no place where this understanding has not spread. There are two kinds of ignorance—the genuine and the self-willed. The first requires education and opportunity. The second finally corrupts to the point of dehumanisation. We live in a society which is officially entering a period of the second ignorance. Many, and especially the young, are resisting. Such, briefly, is the context at home and abroad in which you publish, analyse, inform, exhort and plan. Long live *Labour Monthly*! Long live Palme Dutt!

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LORD SNOW:

Any country which shuts out Marxist thought is cutting off its nose to spite its face. Mr. Palme Dutt has been providing us with Marxist insight for 45 years. He has never bent nor muffled an opinion: but equally he has never been personally malicious. He has often been polemical, but always witty. On his 70th Birthday I send him warm greetings and the hope that we shall read his pronouncements until some more decades come round.

Sir COMPTON MACKENZIE:

Let me take this opportunity of congratulating *Labour Monthly* on its forty-fifth birthday and of wishing its Editor many happy returns of his seventieth birthday.

JOHN GOLLAN, General Secretary, Communist Party of Great Britain:

Congratulations to *Labour Monthly* on the attainment of its 45th Birthday and wishing it continued expansion in circulation and political influence in the years to come. *Labour Monthly* under the unbroken editorship of R. Palme Dutt is the longest-lived and greatest political monthly in British history. Throughout its 45 years it has helped and inspired Communists, Socialists, Progressive Intellectuals, militant Trade Unionists, throughout the English-speaking world. It has always been and still is a platform in which those of the Left can express their opinions on the great questions of the day. Its influence has been particularly marked in the British colonies and in the new developing nations that have emerged from them. Many of the leaders who were active in the liberation struggles in these countries are warm friends of *Labour Monthly*. *Labour Monthly* has had to wage a sustained fight against the attempts of governments throughout the world to impede its circulation amongst their peoples. The 'Notes of the Month', by R. Palme Dutt, appearing throughout the 45 years have attracted many friends and incurred the hatred of the enemies of Progress: they are an achievement unsurpassed in political writing, and mirror all the great struggles of this century. In the period ahead when the attacks on the unions have got to be defeated, and the movement for the struggle against the monopolies, for the ending of the war in Vietnam, for the colonial liberation and for economic and social advance, *Labour Monthly* faces one of the greatest challenges in its history, and deserves the unstinting support of progressives everywhere.

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GEORGE ELVIN, General Secretary, Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians:

Greetings to *Labour Monthly* and its Editor on their joint stamina. It is remarkable in these days for a magazine to last so long and throughout its entire life to stimulate discussions on vital problems in the labour movement.

PROFESSOR E. H. S. BURHOP:

Congratulations on the double anniversary of *Labour Monthly* and of R. Palme Dutt, its perpetual editor and most distinguished contributor. Very many people both inside and outside the Peace Movement look to the *Labour Monthly* and to Palme Dutt for clear and incisive comments and analyses of the world situation. Both, and the two can scarcely be separated, have earned the respect and affection of a great number of people throughout the United Kingdom, the former dependent territories and indeed the world.

GEORGE MATTHEWS, Editor, Morning Star:

Hearty congratulations on the double birthday. Palme Dutt's writings and his penetrating 'Notes of the Month' have been an invaluable help to two generations. The Notes are an achievement completely unique in Marxist journalism. Long may R.P.D. flourish to give us all the benefit of his wisdom. To *Labour Monthly*, best wishes for the future. Life begins at 45!

MAURICE DOBB, M.A., Ph.D., Lecturer in Economics, Cambridge:

As one who remembers the *Labour Monthly* from its first numbers and well recalls those early numbers (a little nostalgically?) and their influence upon his own political history and upon the left-wing of the labour movement at the time, readily I send congratulations and warm good wishes to this journal and its editor on their double anniversary. May their shadow never grow less!

PROFESSOR J. D. BERNAL, F.R.S.:

I have been a reader of *Labour Monthly* for many years and I have been always inspired by Palme Dutt's 'Notes of the Month' which have provided a running commentary on the enormously important events of the last decade. I would like to take this oppor-

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tunity on the occasion of the 70th Birthday of Palme Dutt to send to *Labour Monthly* and to Palme Dutt himself my best wishes.

C. DESMOND GREAVES, Editor, Irish Democrat:

To Marxists in these islands, the past half-century has brought many surprises, much hope deferred as the unsuspected involutions of history have uncoiled themselves, and some disappointments. But their abiding principles have justified themselves a thousandfold, and have been nowhere better expressed than in *Labour Monthly*, nor better personified than in its Editor, R. Palme Dutt, who has combined intellectual resolving power with an abounding sense of humour. May he live and work with us for many more years.

LORD BROCKWAY:

Many of us who do not share the Communist ideology reflected in the *Labour Monthly* have nevertheless an admiration for the contribution which it has made to the discussion of both theoretical and practical problems of importance in this critical period of human development. I should like particularly to pay tribute to its Editor, R. Palme Dutt, who over the years has been steadfast in his opposition to Imperialism and Capitalism. Many times we have not agreed, but that does not detract in the least from my appreciation of the service which he has rendered to the freedom of people and to the cause of Socialism.

The Very Reverend HEWLETT JOHNSON, D.D., D.Th., M.A., B.Sc.:

I am in my 93rd year and my doctor would not let me face the journey by road to join the great meeting celebrating the 45th Anniversary of *Labour Monthly* and the 70th Birthday of its editor. I cannot express what we owe in debt to you.

2. From Friends Overseas

LUIGI LONGO, General Secretary, Communist Party of Italy:

Allow us, on the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of the foundation of *Labour Monthly* coinciding with the 70th Birthday of its Editor, to send you, on behalf of the Italian Communists, sincere wishes for a long life and further successes in the service of the working class. The name of Palme Dutt is indissolubly connected

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with the history of your journal, which represents an important part of the history of the working-class movement in Britain. *Labour Monthly* is already the most significant expression of that 'prodigy of survival' of which the great writer of your country, George Bernard Shaw, spoke in a message to your journal 25 years ago. It has shown in all these years the validity of socialist ideas being able to interpret the events in a transforming world in the light of Marxism, thus contributing to the spread of socialist ideas among working people and intellectuals in many countries. Since its foundation *Labour Monthly* has made an important contribution by stating the growing role that the national liberation movements were assuming step by step in the imperialist era as an essential component of the struggle for socialism. And it is in this field, we believe it can be said, that the personal work of comrade Palme Dutt—both as a student and as a political leader—has been extremely precious, also for the Marxists outside Britain.

S. NOSAKA, Chairman, Central Committee, Communist Party of Japan:

On the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of *Labour Monthly* and Palme Dutt's 70th Birthday, I send you my cordial greetings and congratulation. As one of the contributors to *Labour Monthly* at the time of its inception, I sincerely wish that your magazine will further actively contribute to the cause of the British working class and the liberation of the people, and will strive for the promotion of the joint struggle and the international united front of the anti-imperialist, democratic forces throughout the world against U.S. imperialist policies of war, aggression and national oppression. Wishing you a long life and every success in your work.

GASTON PLISSONNIER, Central Committee, Communist Party of France:

To R. Palme Dutt, founder in 1921 and editor of *Labour Monthly*, we send hearty congratulations and best wishes from all French Communists on your 70th birthday. You have devoted your life to the propagation of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. An untiring defender of the cause of the oppressed peoples in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, you are playing a great part today in the struggle against the aggression of American imperialism in Vietnam. We send you our best wishes for long years of fruitful work in the service of the great cause of democracy, peace and socialism.

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DR. HERBERT APTHEKER, National Director of the American Institute for Marxist Studies:

In the age-long struggle of humanity for a reasonable, just, fraternal, creative and peaceful social order, indispensable contributions have been made by *Labour Monthly* in its 45 years and by its indefatigable editor, R. Palme Dutt. So far as the signatory above is concerned, his whole intellectual outlook—his consciousness—was shaped decisively by R. Palme Dutt and the magazine that he has so magnificently edited. I am sure that the same is true of literally thousands of others in the United States, and millions everywhere.

PROFESSOR JÜRGEN KUCZYNSKI:

A double birthday for the International Labour Movement! And quite naturally, one feels—for how could one separate R.P.D. from *L.M.* and *L.M.* from R.P.D.? So, equally naturally one says: May they live and stay with us forever!

3. *From Journals Abroad*

(So many greetings have been received from fraternal journals in many parts of the world, that we will have to print the majority of them next month. They will include: AUSTRALIA, The Tribune; AUSTRIA, Weg und Ziel; BULGARIA, Rabotnicezko Delo; CUBA, Granma; FRANCE, Cahiers du Communisme; Democratic Nouvelle; La Pensee; GERMANY, Einheit; Wirtschafts Wissenschaft; ISRAEL, Kol Haam; Zo Haderekh; NETHERLANDS, Politiek en Cultuur. We print below greetings from World Marxist Review, USA and USSR.)

Problems of Peace and Socialism

(World Marxist Review)

It gives us pleasure to greet *Labour Monthly*, one of the oldest journals of the international working-class movement, on the occasion of its 45th Anniversary. Readers in dozens of countries are aware of its firm stand in support of the cause of the working class, the cause of freedom and socialism, its steadfast exposure of imperialism and all other enemies of peace, progress and socialism. A herald of working-class unity, *Labour Monthly* has always shown an example of co-operation with the Left and progressive people whose views possibly differ from those of its editor. The prestige of the journal has been enhanced by the wide range of its contributors, among them prominent trade unionists and leaders of the working-class and national liberation movement in many countries. Right from the very beginning *Labour Monthly* has been ably edited by R. Palme Dutt, veteran of the British and international Communist movement. His 'Notes of the Month' published in almost every issue, have won international acclaim as a brilliant example of Marxist journalism. We warmly greet Palme Dutt on the occasion of his 70th Birthday, and *World Marxist Review* (Problems of Peace and Socialism) wishes its brother journal, *Labour Monthly*, further success in the fight for socialism.—*Editorial Board.*

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UNITED STATES

New World Review:

I am proud to be among those to send greetings to *Labour Monthly* and to its remarkable Editor, R. Palme Dutt. Through all the years since its foundation I have followed *Labour Monthly* and am deeply indebted to it for all that it has contributed to my education and deeper understanding of the struggle for socialism throughout the world and for the help it has been to me in my own editorial work. Above all, I want to express boundless admiration and gratitude to R. Palme Dutt for his brilliant monthly review of world events, his clear and penetrating Marxist analysis, presented never in a dull and dogmatic way, but always with style and verve and eloquence. His monthly 'Notes' are incomparable and indispensable. May he have the health and strength to continue them for many more years.—*Jessica Smith.*

Political Affairs:

Heartiest congratulations on your 45th Anniversary. *Labour Monthly* has always been a source of great inspiration to those of us on *Political Affairs* who have read it over these many years of a rapidly changing world. We have always appreciated the clarity, incisiveness and depth of the articles in your magazine as a model to be emulated. The stimulating 'Notes of the Month', written by your brilliant and revered Editor, R. Palme Dutt, has helped us keep abreast of developments in your own country and has cast a searching ray on the profound developments taking place in other parts of the globe. May we take this occasion, too, to express our warm comradely greetings to R. Palme Dutt on his 70th birthday. Good health and long life.—*Hyman Lumer* and *Betty Gannett.*

Science & Society:

Receiving the latest issue of *Labour Monthly* is an event we look forward to at *Science & Society*. We have come to rely on its presentation and working-class analyses of the situation in England. Its observations on international affairs are always illuminating. And then there are the incomparable 'Notes' by the perennially young R.P.D. We still cherish the inspired issues on the themes of 'Forty Years After' and 'Marxism After Fifty Years'. When the history of socialism in England comes to be written in a socialist world, no name will stand out more brilliantly than that of *Labour Monthly.—A. Evenitsky*

The Worker:

The Worker is proud to join the thousands of admirers of *Labour Monthly* and R. Palme Dutt in hailing the 45th Anniversary of the one and the 70th Birthday of the other. The celebration of both together in June 1966, is a happy conjunction of events. Everyone will agree that ever since 1921, *Labour Monthly* has been the foremost progressive, Marxist journal in the English language. It has always been a clear and trustworthy guide through the zigzags and turbulence of world events toward the objectives of humanity, peace and socialism. *Labour Monthly* has dealt with the weightiest problems facing mankind—but it has never been dull. It has always been interesting to read, and it has been written in a most felicitous style. For much of this, *Labour Monthly* and its readers throughout the world have R. Palme Dutt to thank. As editor from its start, Dutt has done a magnificent job. He has drawn to its pages some of the world's best thinkers and doers. And he has set a high standard for all other authors by his own lucid

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brilliant writing. But Dutt has been more than a writer and editor. He was one of the creators of the international Communist movement, which picked up the banner of Marxism after the first world war, and has led the workers of the world through the morass of capitalism far along the road to peace and socialism. He has contributed mightily to the theoretical foundations of Marxism in this period. He has been a steadfast guide to the British working class in the heartland of imperialism in the struggle against chauvinism and colonialism. He has been in the forefront always in the struggles of the peoples of India, which led finally to their wresting freedom and independence from British imperialism. *The Worker* wishes *Labour Monthly* and R. Palme Dutt many happy returns of their anniversaries.—*Carl Winter.*

U.S.S.R.

International Affairs:

The Editorial Board of *International Affairs* sends you greetings and best wishes. *Labour Monthly*, one of the leading progressive periodicals in Britain, is widely known in the Soviet Union. It has always been a militant organ of the British working class and has spread among the people the ideas of peace, Socialism, and international working-class solidarity in the fight against reaction and imperialism. While marking the anniversary of *Labour Monthly*, we also wish to do justice to its untiring editor, R. Palme Dutt. Soviet readers know him well through his brilliant articles in the Soviet press, including *International Affairs*. Combining outstanding talent as a historian, publicist and organiser, he has greatly contributed to the success of *Labour Monthly*. We send Palme Dutt hearty greetings for his 70th Birthday and wish him the best of health, unfailing energy and success in the great work to which he is dedicated.—*Sh. Sanakoyev.*

Kommunist:

Congratulations *Labour Monthly*—fighter for the unity of forces of the labour movement in Great Britain. Your work has been an important contribution to the common cause of the international proletariat. *Labour Monthly* spreads and defends the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, the firm foundation of the international unity of the working class. Your journal carries on the discussion of the burning problems of the working-class movement of Great Britain, fights irreconcilably against the yoke of the monopolies and for the fundamental interests of the working people and supports the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples. Allow us to wish you more success in your courageous struggle for the victory of the ideas of peace, democracy and socialism. To Palme Dutt, on his 70th birthday, allow us to send our cordial congratulations. The Communist movement has in your person an experienced and tried fighter for the cause of the working class, a steadfast Marxist and Leninist who has made a great contribution to the common struggle for a new and just society. We value you as a true friend of the Soviet Union and our Party, and wish you health and a long, fruitful and creative life.—*Editorial Board.*

New Times:

The staff of *New Times*, weekly journal of world affairs, sincerely congratulates its colleagues. All these years *Labour Monthly* has been actively participating in the struggle

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for socialist Britain, advocating and creatively developing the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and the lofty principles of proletarian internationalism. As your constant readers, we highly appreciate the depth of analysis and militant spirit of your world-renowned journal. Your Editor, Palme Dutt, is well known not only to the British workers but to the workers of many foreign countries as well. Palme Dutt is an outstanding champion for the ideals of Communism, national liberation and social progress of colonial peoples. We are gratified to have Palme Dutt as our regular contributor and wish him many happy returns of the day and success in his useful work for the benefit of British workers and the strengthening of international solidarity of the working class. May *Labour Monthly*, a tested fighter for social and economic progress, continue long and proudly. — *Editorial Board.*

Pravda:

Warm congratulations to the editorial board of *Labour Monthly*, its contributors and readers. We wish you further success in your struggle for the vital interests of the working people of Great Britain, for the development of joint actions of the Left forces of the country, for propaganda of Marxism-Leninism, for peace and socialism. To Palme Dutt, on behalf of the editorial board, staff and readers of the newspaper *Pravda:* our warm congratulations to you, the outstanding figure of the British and international workers' movement, prominent propagandist and theoretician of Marxism-Leninism, on the occasion of your seventieth birthday. With all our hearts we wish you good health and energy that you, a steady champion of peace and happiness of peoples, great friend of the Soviet Union, need so much in your fruitful activities.—*Editorial Board.*

BOOK REVIEW

The British Communist Party
L. J. Macfarlane
Macgibbon and Kee, 338 pp., 63s.

THIS IS A HISTORY of the Communist Party of Great Britain from its foundation in 1920 (with some account of how that happened) until 1929. It grew out of a Ph.D. thesis, and still bears the unmistakable stamp of its origin: carefully and conscientiously compiled from documents and some private information, it is innocent of any understanding of how the activities of men are interconnected with events irrespective of their wishes.

Thus there is not the slightest indication of how the national and international moves for Socialist unity in Britain before 1914 were prompted by the tremendous class struggles of the last few years before then: nor of the even bigger struggles of the months from September 1918 onwards—the strikes in the engineering and mining industries, the resumed struggle of the Irish people, and then (after the November Armistice) the soldiers' strike of January, 1919, the police strike, the great miners' and railwaymen's struggles and so on. These, with the fall of Empires and the revolutionary struggles on the Continent, made a determined renewal of the effort for unity even more certain than before the war—though, as in every country, on a Marxist basis this time, and naturally stimulated by the achievement of working class revolution in Russia, for the first time since the Paris Commune.

Mr. Macfarlane hardly notices all this. Hence he has to fall back on the now traditional story of outside

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interference—'Moscow orders' (at a time when there was no Comintern and no connection with Soviet Russia, cut off by 14 invading armies and naval blockade), the Comintern a little later, and so on. And throughout his story it is the Communist International which plays the decisive part in the destinies of the British Communists. Within the scope of the present review, this question cannot be treated with the detail it deserves. I am sure that James Klugmann's history of this period in the life of the CP, soon to be published, will provide that. But certain basic things need to be borne in mind, if Mr. Macfarlane's work is to be properly judged.

First, the Comintern was not, either in Lenin's time or even in Stalin's, 'Moscow' i.e. Russian. Its Executive was an assembly of Communists with vastly varied experiences, in which the British were always adequately represented. Of course the weight of Russian opinion was high and valued: but discussion never went one-sidedly their way. Serious students might usefully get hold of a fully documented booklet which the CP published in August, 1926, *Orders from Moscow?* for which I wrote the introduction,

Secondly, the British Party from very early on had its own views, which it upheld in the teeth of very influential and determined opposition from foreign comrades. R. P. Dutt has already exploded the myth, repeated by Macfarlane and others, that the Comintern foisted the leadership of Pollitt and himself on the Party in 1922 and has shown how their emergence to a role in the leadership developed on the basis of a revolt from below winning a democratic victory at the Congress, in opposition to the majority of the old Executive and also to the then official representation of the International. One could add (i) the *rejection* at our Congress in 1924, of the demand of the then International representative to put up candidates against the Labour Party all along the line and cease pressing for affiliation (ii) our *successful* insistence, at the EC of the CI that year (Gallacher, Bell and others took part), that Trotskyist proposals to regard the left wing Labour MPs as a possible 'gate to Socialism' alternative to the Communist Party of Britain should be dropped (iii) our lines of preparation for the General Strike (May 1-12, 1926), our policy during that colossal event applied *before* any advice from the Comintern could reach us, and our criticism of certain 'left' actions by Soviet trade unionists afterwards (iv) the independent attitude of our delegation at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 on main political documents presented by the Executive Committee of the CI. All these were not on 'incidents', or 'trivial', as one reviewer has suggested, but were on fundamental questions.

I do not wish to belittle the hard work Mr. Macfarlane has done, although there are a large number of *factual* slips which necessitate his book being treated cautiously even as a work of reference. But it brings out all the more clearly that a true history of a revolutionary party—candid, objective but not impartial—can be written only by a revolutionary. The great divide runs through the ranks of historians no less than through any other group of writers.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN.

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LM goes forward confidently into its 46th year, strengthened and encouraged by the sincere tributes that have been pouring in for the past months, culminating in the Anniversary party that was made possible by the generosity of our readers.

It is difficult adequately to convey the wealth of warmth and appreciation generated by friends from all over the world—their esteem is a spur to even greater effort on our part.

It is more urgent than ever, therefore, that our financial life-line doesn't take a seasonable dip during the holiday period.

A reader with our fund on his mind makes a pertinent point: 'The legions of readers who owe an enormous debt to *LM* must take some responsibility for ensuring doubled circulation by its 50th birthday. Every donation helps towards this aim, so I ask all who have benefited from *LM* in the past to contribute to its future development'. This suggestion could work wonders for our budget and sales.

'I'm sending my donation before my holiday', writes a Yorkshire reader 'because all I'll have left when I return will be good intentions and those won't be enough! If by some mischance I ever miss my copy of *LM* the loss seems irreparable, so the least I can do is to make sure the *LM*s roll out each month without undue financial strain'.

With efforts like these on our behalf we look forward to extending our circulation and reaching many new readers. **Helen Falber**

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